PASSION WEEK SERMONS

By

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This set of plays
to Robert Dean:

To

My Mother

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SUNDAY

"Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."

THE FIRST DAY

PALM SUNDAY

A Day of Triumph

Matthew xxi, 1-11; *Mark xi,* 1-11; *Luke xix,* 29-44; *John xii,* 12-19.

WHEN a proud Roman general had won notable conquests in a foreign land, he was sometimes honored with a public triumph in the imperial city. On the appointed day he was met at the triumphal gate by the Senate and all the magistrates in splendid apparel, and escorted with magnificent pageantry through the streets. In the procession were bands of trumpeters; wagons laden with the spoils of conquered countries, gold, silver, precious stones, vases, and statues; oxen

destined for sacrifice, with gilded horns, adorned with wreaths of flowers and fillets of wool; captive princes with their families; inferior captives, loaded with fetters; the twelve lictors with laurel-wreathed fasces; and finally the triumphant general in his circular chariot drawn by four horses, his robes glittering with golden embroidery, a scepter in his hand, and a wreath of Delphic laurel upon his head. Behind him rode his sons and lieutenants, and then came the entire army, stretching far in the rear, with spears adorned with laurel. On they swept through streets thronged with people in gala attire, past temples and shrines beautified with flowers, up to the Capitol; shouts of applause and songs of praise rising from the vast multitude which viewed with enthusiasm the mighty demonstration, and filled the city with the tumult of popular rejoicing.

From this picture of triumph we turn to another on the Syrian territory of the Roman Empire, different in type, and more

impressive in character. It is the extraordinary progress of Jesus of Nazareth from Bethany, where He has been spending two eventful days in the companionship of beloved friends, to Jerusalem, where He will conclude His public ministry, and unite with His nation in the celebration of the Passover. For days people have been swarming from every corner of Palestine to the Holy City to purify themselves in preparation for this greatest of the Jewish festivals. Among many of these pilgrims the most frequent inquiry has been, whether Jesus would dare come to the Feast in view of the command issued by the Pharisees to arrest Him the moment His whereabouts were discovered. The Master had set this question at rest by making an open pilgrimage, attended by His disciples and a constantly increasing throng of travelers, from Perea beyond the Jordan on the highway through Jericho toward the capital, conferring blessings and speaking some of His most significant mes-

sages as He proceeded. At Bethany He halted, while the main body of pilgrims pressed on to the sacred city; but on Sunday morning, the day after the Jewish Sabbath, accompanied by His disciples and a band of curious and interested observers, He made His way to the political center of His nation.

Bethany is pleasantly situated on the southeastern slope of Mt. Olivet near its base, and not more than two miles distant from Jerusalem. The way to be traversed, however, is somewhat difficult. A modern traveler has made it on foot in an hour and a half, proceeding leisurely. The route of Jesus winds up the slope of the mountain, and thence downward into the valley of Jehoshaphat, through which flows the brook Kedron, not far from the city wall. The morning was probably well advanced before Jesus started, but He had not gone far on the way when He paused to give a command which must have awakened surprise in the

minds of those who heard it. They were near Bethphage, the site of which can not now be located, but which with Bethany was virtually a suburb of Jerusalem, and was by the rabbis legally reckoned a part of it, when Jesus commissioned two of His disciples to go into an adjacent village, perhaps Bethphage itself, though that name seems to have attached itself to the district as well as to a definite locality, and procure for Him an ass's colt, which He says they will find tied by the roadside. No man has ever yet mounted this animal, but on its back He will make His progress into the city. The disciples immediately hurry away, and discover the colt exactly as their Master had described standing in the open street before the door of its owners. When they are asked to explain their conduct in laying hands upon this beast without permission, the disciples respond as they have been directed to do by their Master, "The Lord hath need of him." The colt is instantly relinquished by its owners, and is

forthwith led back along the road to meet Jesus and His company.

The unusual character of this transaction has arrested the attention of bystanders, who are quick to spread the intelligence of its probable meaning. The place is just outside Jerusalem, and the multitudes who have come up to the Feast are occupying not only the city itself, but much of the surrounding territory. With great rapidity the rumor runs through this mass of people that Jesus is approaching attended by a numerous cavalcade. Meanwhile the city has already been stirred by the expectation that the Master will soon make His advent into the very midst of those who are seeking His life. Pilgrims who came up with Him from Galilee and Perea and preceded Him to Jerusalem, persons who yesterday witnessed the feast at Simon's house in His honor, and some who perhaps this very morning came from Bethany are repeating the news that He will soon appear in the city.

Nearly three millions of people are said to have been sometimes crowded into Jerusalem on the occasion of the Passover. Such a multitude would be eager for any excitement which could add zest to a holiday celebration. The prospect of a sensational procession would be most enlivening. An immense concourse of humanity now begins to pour through the city gates to meet the advancing company. The majority of those who are going out to intercept but not to oppose the progress of Jesus are probably persons who have come up to the Feast from the provinces. A few are citizens of Jerusalem, among whom may be noticed a number of Pharisees, animated by hatred and jealousy, and feeling that their presence will be needed to curb the intemperate enthusiasm of the unthinking mob. On they sweep like a resistless tide. Almost before the disciples can reach their Master with the colt, the crowd has rolled on up the highway to the point where Jesus is awaiting their return.

Thus two streams meet, one composed of those who have been following Jesus from Bethany, and the other of that great host which has been pouring out of Jerusalem. The latter have been cutting down palm branches as they moved along, and now they wave them wildly in the air as they approach Jesus, meanwhile rending the air with shouts of jubilation. Their enthusiasm becomes infectious. The disciples strip off their upper garments and spread them on the colt. They lift their Master to a seat on the back of the animal. They stretch their robes along the road as a carpet for His royal progress, their example being followed by many in the crowd. In turn they tear palm branches from the trees and strew them in the way. The demonstration has come about so suddenly and so unexpectedly that they can not realize its significance. They are dazzled by the glory of this outburst of popular favor, and they fall into the spirit of the celebration the more readily because it is an unwonted honor

conferred upon their Master. Preceded by the crowd from Jerusalem and followed by the company from Bethany, Jesus rides slowly on toward the city, His ears filled with the applause of the multitude and His eyes resting on the most remarkable scene He has ever witnessed.

All at once the spectacle of this Man borne along on the back of an ass's colt accompanied by the plaudits of the throng, and looking every inch a King in His serene dignity, suggests a well-known prophecy referring to the Messiah, which describes Him as coming in this fashion with all lowliness, yet with every token of royal grace and authority. The apparent fulfillment of this prediction no sooner leaps into the minds of the multitude than they begin lustily to shout, "Hosanna; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." The cry swells into a torrent of acclamation, which is renewed with deeper and more joy-

ous emphasis when the cavalcade catches its first glimpse of the Holy City around a ridge of Olivet. Then the host begins to rejoice and praise God for the wondrous works they have beheld at the hands of this meek but mighty Prince, exclaiming: "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest."

To the Pharisees, who are witnesses of this tumult of popular enthusiasm, every shout of joy brings a stab of pain. They appeal to Jesus to silence this misguided and obviously profane adulation. But He refuses to interpose any protest, and says, with superb consciousness of the honor due Him, "I tell you that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." As the storm of applause gives no sign of subsiding, the discomfited Pharisees turn disconsolately to their fellows, and cry: "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after Him!"

Presently the city, which has been shut

out of sight for a few minutes by a shoulder of Mt. Olivet, round which the throng is moving in the descent toward the valley, breaks into full view. The sight thus suddenly thrust before their gaze is calculated to make a profound impression upon any sensitive soul, and it arouses in Jesus an unusual tumult of emotions. As He gazes earnestly upon the magnificent panorama of towers, temple, walls, and dwellings which crown the hills of the ancient capital of His people, His mind rehearsing its marvelous history, His spirit filled with sorrow on account of its approaching catastrophe, He breaks forth into loud lamentations, His whole frame shaken by the stress of His feelings. That fine prospect which stretches before His gaze is to be made desolate by the hand of the despoiler, but the cause of it will lie in the sinful indifference of the Jews to their highest spiritual interests. He would save His people from this appalling disaster, but they will not heed His warnings or accept His sal-

vation. Above the roar of the multitude's vociferous plaudits He hears the crash of doom soon to fall upon the city of David.

And now the procession slowly sweeps downward into the valley of Jehoshaphat, passes Gethsemane, crosses the Kedron, and streams through the city gates. It winds onward through narrow streets to the historic elevation on which the temple rears its majestic proportions. The steady tramp of marching hosts and the rising tumult of acclamations draw the people from their homes to the streets, hung with flags and banners in token of the Feast, and to the house-tops and other points of vantage from which the exciting movement can be viewed. From lip to lip the eager inquiry runs, "Who is this?" To which hoarse voices from the crowd shout from below, "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee."

When the temple is reached Jesus dismounts from the beast which has carried Him thither, and enters the sacred precincts with

a calm and magisterial air, which must have impressed every beholder. He seems to be taking possession of the holy edifice in the name of the Lord. He solemnly notes every detail which falls beneath His gaze. Long He looks with unbroken silence, save for the intermittent shouts which are borne to His ears from without, where men are still repeating the Hosannas with which they greeted His advent.

At length, when the evening shadows begin to stretch across the pavement, He turns sadly away from the inspection of the courts which to-morrow He will cleanse of their profanations, and wearily returns with His disciples, this time on foot and unsupported by the applause of the multitude, to the rest and quiet of beloved Bethany.

I

ONE can not read this fascinating story, which is told with varying details by all the evangelists, without asking whether it was

in any degree accidental, nor can he follow the events carefully without being convinced that it was an integral part of the plan which Jesus had devised for the conclusion of His public ministry. The record leaves us no opportunity to fancy that our Lord simply fell into the mood of the Passover celebrants, and submitted good-naturedly to a spontaneous ebullition of popular enthusiasm. He evidently made deliberate preparations for His entry into Jerusalem under circumstances which would unmistakably point to the position among men which He had claimed as His own by divine right. He foresaw the triumph which would follow His spectacular advance to Jerusalem, and the dread consequences to His life which would ensue. He thrust Himself forward in the most public manner and on the occasion best calculated to attract the attention of both friends and foes, knowing full well that His defiance of the Jewish leaders would provide the very pretext they needed for seizing Him and putting Him to

death. The response of the multitudes to this bold course of action must have been grateful to His spirit, but it did not prevent Him from realizing that their very reception of Him with every demonstration of delight would only serve to intensify the hatred and determination of His enemies.

To say, therefore, that for a moment Jesus meditated the quick establishment of His kingdom by a kind of political *coup d' etat,* is simply preposterous. Such an undertaking would have been utterly foreign to the spirit of His mission. It is equally an error to imagine that under the enthusiasm of the hour He was temporarily swept from His better judgment by the expectation that the people would actually acknowledge Him as their Messiah in due form. He was swayed by no such agreeable delusion. What He proposed was such an emphatic assertion of His Messiahship as should leave no room for doubt concerning His own conviction regarding His rightful place among men. Hitherto

He had spoken in terms which were capable of misinterpretation by His opponents. Moreover, He had refrained from permitting royal honors to be paid to Him. The time had now come when He would clear away every vestige of a reason for misunderstanding Him. He would affirm His consciousness of spiritual kingship so openly that no man hereafter could ever deny that during His lifetime Jesus had laid claim to the throne of David.

It was right that He should enter Jerusalem as a king, for He was of the blood royal, and upon His shoulders God had placed the government of the people. It was divinely fit that He should move on to the capital in the manner He chose, for He was king, not by virtue of martial conquest, but by reason of His sovereignty over the souls of men. The animal He selected for His royal progress was significant. The horse would have been too closely identified in popular thought with war-like demonstrations. The ass

would convey no such misleading suggestions. Yet princes and nobles had not scorned to employ it. Thus humility and dignity were blended in the choice of the colt on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem. He was the Prince of Peace, and He came to the City of Peace with lowly grandeur.

The day on which He determined to make His entry into Jerusalem was not lightly chosen. It was the fourth before the Feast, on which the Jews were required by the law to select their Paschal lamb. It was on a day of such a character that, conscious of His predestined devotion to a sacrificial death, He would openly place Himself upon the altar by His defiance of His adversaries. An ordinary man riding into Jerusalem on an ass would not be likely to provoke much remark at such a time. But this Man, with His glorious record of miracles wrought for suffering humanity, with His reputation for the most wonderful words that ever fell from mortal lips, with His astonishing claims re-

membered everywhere in Palestine, could not pass without notice from Bethany to Jerusalem, "meek and riding upon an ass." The word of prophecy had too clear an illustration here to be overlooked by any pious Jew in that mighty throng which surged around Jesus as He journeyed over the Mount of Olives, and, as with one voice, the multitude shouted: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!" It was an impromptu recognition on the part of the people, but Jesus knew it would be forthcoming, and He accepted it as evidence of the divine approval and seal of His royal claims, and as a sure token that the hour of His Messianic sacrifice was at hand.

II

THE characteristics of genuine royalty flash forth resplendently from the behavior of Jesus on Palm Sunday. There appears first of all that exercise of authority which becomes a king. With an impressive air of

superior right the Master sends His disciples to procure the beast on which He will make His entry into Jerusalem. They have but one response to make in case they are met by objections to the removal of the colt from the hands of its owners, "The Lord hath need of him." It is enough. Whether an unknown follower of Jesus has been waiting for this word, as has sometimes been conjectured, or a perfect stranger is moved by this mysterious demand to acquiesce in the requisition now made upon him for his property, one can not fail to feel the Master's sense of superior proprietorship, or miss the grasp which He has upon other wills. It is the precise method of governments, which in time of national exigency do not scruple to lay hands upon the possessions of their subjects, who in turn surrender their private rights to a public necessity. As the day advanced the command which Jesus held over the throngs to whom He was the center of an overmastering interest must have been constantly manifest.

From such an excitable concourse of unreasoning enthusiasts explosions of violence might easily have been awakened. The whole movement had to the Pharisees the look of an insurrection. But the Roman soldiers in the garrison of the castle Antonia had no occasion to leave their quarters to quell this mob, which quietly dispersed when the day's excitement had subsided. Jesus was truly the Prince of Peace.

His royal authority was most evident to the careful observer when, at the end of His advance to Jerusalem, He took possession of the temple. He entered not as a curious visitor or even as a quiet worshiper, but as the ruler of God's house, as a king surveying His dominions. There was a sense of mastery in that silent, prolonged look with which He searched the place. The city was His, the company which packed its streets belonged to Him, the temple was His property.

One is moved, as he watches the Master solemnly observing everything around Him,

to recall the occasions of His previous coming to this temple: first as a babe presented by His parents to Jehovah, taken into the arms of the aged Simeon, and pronounced by him the Glory of Israel; then as a lad of twelve years amazing the doctors of law and divinity by His questions and comments; finally in His ripe manhood often teaching unhindered the profound principles of His kingdom to those who gathered about Him in these sacred courts. But now He comes to assume command of the place for a brief hour or two in token of His supremacy. As a babe He had glorified the temple by His very presence; as a lad He had demonstrated His right to leadership; as a man He had astonished all who heard Him by the authoritative tone with which He taught; to-day He shows Himself to be the very Prince of God's heritage.

The fact that His authority was not recognized by those who for the moment were the acknowledged custodians of Jewish rights and privileges does not affect His position in

the least, unless it be to bring into striking relief the true dignity of His person. One could almost smile sardonically at the sublime irony of the situation. Those misguided Pharisees, who are narrowly watching His every movement for an opportunity to ensnare Him in the meshes of some legal complication, fancy He is only a maddened enthusiast whose distemper is swiftly pushing Him on to death. In less than a week they will see Him finish His career on a cross. They do not dream that His claim to kingship has any justification in the eternal counsels of God; that He is even now sitting in judgment upon their repudiation of His mission; that if He chose to summon the angelic legions which are accoutred for His defense, no power on earth could apprehend Him; that He is their absolute master for time and eternity, only holding His authority in brief abeyance that He may finish His redemptive work. They fancy that they can take Him at will whom the heaven of heavens can not

contain. The pathos of it is too deep for laughter.

There is a famous picture of Napoleon Bonaparte standing with arms folded behind his back on the deck of the *Bellerophon,* gazing with bent brows and dim eyes upon the receding shores of France, from which he is being carried over the sea by the English to the inhospitable island of St. Helena, where he will eat out his heart in bitter exile, cursing the misfortunes which have robbed him of an empire. A figure like this Jesus may have appeared to the Pharisees to be, as He lingered in the temple after the triumphal entry, and turned His serious gaze upon its walls and furnishings. He had wept bitterly over Jerusalem a few hours before; He looked sadly now on all which He must shortly leave forever. So they may have reasoned, but with what a wide breach they missed the truth! To-morrow He will return to sweep out the defilers of the temple. From that hour He will talk almost unceasingly of

His kingdom. His parables will reflect His consciousness of royalty. He will affirm Himself a king before Pilate's tribunal. He will wear a crown of thorns in token of His sovereignty. His enemies will put an epitaph upon His cross declaring in the three greatest languages of the age that He is truly a king. He will break through the grim restraints of death to prove His mastery of nature. He will rise through clouds of glory to the "majesty on high," and take His shining seat of judgment as the Lord of heaven and earth.

Carlyle has reminded us that the king is the man who "can," and Jesus has demonstrated His ability to rule through nineteen centuries of steadily increasing personal influence in the civilization of the world. The disciples of Pythagoras were satisfied that they had given the ultimate warrant for any proposition when they could declare their master had uttered it. Millions of human beings in every part of the earth place the authority of

Jesus above the word of the most powerful monarchs that have ever wielded a scepter or occupied a throne. At His command to spread the gospel throughout the whole creation, thousands of devoted adherents to His cause have dropped considerations of expediency and self-interest and hurried to the ends of the earth to obey His final behest. He is amply fulfilling the prediction of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem; He is marching straight into the strongholds of organized society and dictating policies to its leaders.

When Pompey, surnamed the Great, had brought his campaigns in the East to a victorious termination and had covered himself and his legions with glory, he returned to Italy with much splendor, and proceeded to Rome with captive princes in his train, and wagons laden with spoils as an offering to his country. Applauding crowds welcomed him along the whole line of march to the capital. A splendid column was erected to commemorate his achievements. His public

triumph was the most glorious which the citizens of Rome had ever beheld. It was voted that he might wear his triumphal robe in the Senate whenever and as long as he chose. But this was the climax of his career; from this moment he steadily declined in power and influence. As Froude declares: "The fireworks over, and with the aureole of glory about his brow, the great Pompey, like another Samson shorn of his locks, dropped into impotency and insignificance." But the triumphal entry of Jesus into the Jewish capital was but the prophecy of His entrance into a career of continuous conquest, based not upon martial exploits, accompanied by waste of lands, the looting of treasure, and the shedding of blood, but upon the peaceful subjugation of human minds and hearts by the power of a redemptive love.

III

VALOR is a kingly attribute, and when devoted to a worthy purpose is most noble. It

shines lustrously out of the conduct of Jesus on Palm Sunday. When He puts Himself forward in the manner of a king, and accepts with every mark of satisfaction the acclamations of the populace, it is with the perfect realization that He is rushing swiftly to His death. His enemies can no longer ignore His movements, for He has plainly shown that He is not simply an inoffensive teacher of righteousness, but a claimant for the highest authority in the nation. There is no possible compromise between acknowledging Him and killing Him. This He has foreseen with utmost accuracy, yet it only sharpens His purpose to declare Himself with open disregard of the consequences.

There was superb courage in this, accompanied by a sacred joy almost too deep for human understanding. He rose to the loftiest height of spiritual splendor in this last week of His earthly ministry. With the heavy shadows of impending catastrophe flung along the road to Jerusalem, with the figure

of the cross sharply outlined against the Judæan sky, with the cruel scourge of His enemies already cutting His sinless flesh, with the sound of the hammer which drove the nails into His hands and feet already beating in His ears, and with the boiling rage of the infernal world emitting itself through the hate and anger of the Jewish leaders, like the low growl of a volcano on the point of eruption, He sallied forth joyously to meet His end, sustained by the sublimity of His mission, and cheered by the applause of those in whose interest He was about to die.

History contains no parallel to this extraordinary spectacle. France did not hear the populace of Paris singing the praise of Louis XVI when he was led to the guillotine, nor did that unfortunate monarch display signs of victory in his progress to the tomb. The Scottish hills did not resound with pæans of triumph when Mary, the beautiful but faithless queen, fell a victim to her own folly and

went from a kingdom to a scaffold. The English shouted no hosannas to their king, Charles I, nor did he evince any jubilant emotions when they led him out in front of his palace at Whitehall and placed his head on the block. The progress of royalty to coronation may be attended by notable demonstrations of rejoicing, but no king bids his courtiers caparison his horse that he may ride exultantly to his place of sepulture. "Millions of money for an inch of time," cries Elizabeth in prospect of death. "Kings have much need of mercy," mutters Alexander, Czar of all the Russias, as he feels the chill of the dark river creeping over his frame. It is so that monarchs, like men of commonest mold, often move off toward the narrow house. But here is a King who rides to death in a festal train as if to coronation. His bosom burns with the consciousness of His might. His soul expands with the conception of His dedication to human redemption. He is the Lord of Hosts, He is the

King of Glory; the gates of day will lift up their heads, the everlasting doors of Paradise will swing open to receive Him, and angelic choristers will surpass the multitudes of Palestine in ascriptions of praise and honor for His sacrificial passion and death. All this He knows, and it makes Him dauntless to meet the issue with His murderers.

Here is the courage of kingly service. For the joy of saving human lives He welcomes death with the air of conquest. His disciples swinging along the highway to Jerusalem with the massive procession, their spirits elevated by the boisterous gladness of the shouting throng, may have felt that their dreams of power and place were about to be realized. The gloomy predictions of disaster they had heard from the lips of their Master would not now be fulfilled. James and John might indeed secure their coveted positions of trust and influence near the throne of the kingdom soon to be established. All at once the sky had cleared, and the future was bright with

promise. Thus perhaps they walked toward Jerusalem in a roseate haze of expectation. But their Master had the sure knowledge of a contrary result. He had told His followers but a little time before that "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." It was toward the culmination of this divine enterprise that He was now moving as rapidly as the circumstances of His career would permit Him. Later it would be recorded of Him that He had earned the title and designation of "the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Then it would be clear to all devout intelligences that the royalty of Jesus expressed itself most divinely in sacrifice and service.

It was in the full consciousness of this truth that Jesus gladly accepted the homage of the Passover throng. The noisy demon-

strations which the Pharisees indignantly urged Him to suppress were to Him the earthly echoes of heavenly applause for His consecration to the needs of humanity. The voice of the people was indeed the voice of God. The multitudes were unconsciously fulfilling prophecy. The meaning of their plaudits would afterward stand forth in unmistakable characters. They were truly shouting the Messiah on to His sublime sacrifice. Jesus interpreted their vociferations in spiritual terms, and exclaimed with magnificent hyperbole, "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

IV

JUDGMENT is a royal prerogative, and most impressively did Jesus exercise it on Palm Sunday. A king who wields authority by a divine right which men are quick to recognize, and who devotes his power and person to the needs of his subjects, becomes the in-

evitable arbiter of their destiny. Jesus is Judge by virtue of His authority as the Messiah and not of His sacrifice as Savior. But His is the judgment of love. One can not think that a flush of anger mantled His brow as He broke into this lamentation over Jerusalem: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the day of thy visitation." All the subsequent insults and suffering to which Jesus was subjected by His foul murderers could not call forth from His outraged soul such expressions of profound grief as burst from His lips as He gazed tearfully upon the beloved city which He knew would soon be prostrate

in the dust, trampled to ruin under the iron heel of the oppressor. He experienced all the pain that patriotism and love for humanity could inspire in the prospect of such a devastation, but above all this rose the agony of spirit which was induced by a knowledge that the Jew's rejection of God's offer of salvation from sin through faith in His mission was responsible for their impending doom. Yet must He needs pronounce judgment.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem and the temple, and looked round about upon all things until the gathering shadows of the eventide admonished Him to retire for shelter and rest, His solemn manner betokened not disappointment that His triumph had not issued in the formal recognition of His claims, as perhaps the Pharisees imagined, but the sense of approaching condemnation which the misguided conduct of these leaders of the people would bring upon their heads. The eye of the Master wandering over the whole

area of the temple rested in judgment on those who were perverting the souls of men by their repudiation of His message of salvation.

Nor can we fail to observe that this judgment of Jesus has projected itself through the long centuries down to modern society. The gravest question of our times is, How do our institutions impress Him? He is still "looking round about upon all things." His solemn eyes are taking note of our ways in social, civic, national, and ecclesiastical procedure. We are pleased with the eulogies which foreigners pronounce upon our political and material prosperity. We read their flattering comments upon our development with hungry avidity. It is to no avail unless we know that the Master approves of us. He is the ultimate determiner of things terrestrial. He is entering our cities one by one, weeping in His progress thither if He sees us recreant to our trusts, smiling if He finds us busy with the concerns of His king-

dom, evermore speaking judgment with the glance of His eye as He moves on to His final triumph.

The witnesses of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday were variously affected. The Herodians, temporarily in royal favor, were fearful of an usurper. The Romans dreaded an uprising of the people. The Pharisees were envious of the power which Jesus exercised over the multitude. The common people were wild with hope that a deliverer had appeared at last. The imperial soldiers, looking idly down from the frowning walls of their stronghold, could only laugh at the absurdity of that humble Nazarene aiming at universal conquest. Yet the time was fast approaching when Constantine would bow the knee to Him, when Julian would fling a handful of blood into the air and cry, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" when warriors whose tread had shaken Europe would lay their swords upon His altars and breathe His name in prayer. The trep-

idation of the rulers in Jerusalem was amply justified.

Jesus was fully aware that the applause of the multitude on Palm Sunday was only a temporary ebullition. Even before that day closed, the words "Prophet of Nazareth" had been substituted for "Son of David." He knew that "Hosanna" would soon change into "Crucify Him." The crowd would yield Him but the brief sovereignty of a day. Yet He saw in this evanescent homage the type and prophecy of His eternal reign. He knew the hour was coming when at His name "every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In the process of attaining that universal recognition nations that forget God will go down in confusion and ruin, and peoples who reject the Messiah's claims upon their loyalty will suffer inglorious overthrow; but the love of the King will shine forth over

all the sorrow which sin inflicts upon mankind, and His passion for the souls of men will steadfastly draw the multitudes to His feet, till the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He enters upon His perpetual and undisputed reign.

When Overbeck, the German painter, began his studies for his famous picture of "Christ's Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem," he was far from acknowledging the divinity of Jesus. In imagination he followed the Master to the tomb of Lazarus, beheld His restoration of the beloved friend to life, observed the feast made in honor of the wonder-worker, and mingled with the people who came to gaze upon His face. Then in thought, poring over the story in the Gospels, he accompanied the cavalcade which attended Jesus on His way to Jerusalem, witnessed the demonstrations of the people, looked with deepening interest on the exhibition of Christ's sorrow over the doomed city, and

caught a vision of the Master's consecration to an heroic purpose. Gradually the truth entered his soul, and he gave himself to his task with a passionate ardor. As swiftly as his genius enabled him to proceed he worked out his conception of Jesus and the multitude that hailed Him as the Messiah; and when at last the painting was finished, and he looked with tender interest upon the face of the Christ, and realized the unutterable love which constrained Him to give His life for man's redemption, the artist fell upon his knees and cried, "O God, forgive!" and from that hour became a devout worshiper of the Son of man. How can any soul make the short pilgrimage from Bethany to Jerusalem in company with Jesus, and not likewise bow in penitent reverence before Him!

MONDAY

"He found nothing but leaves."

THE SECOND DAY

A DAY OF JUDGMENT

Matthew xxi, 18-22; Mark xi, 12-19; Luke xix, 45-48.

IT is related of Richard Coeur de Leon that once during his crusades, when it was discovered that he was near the Holy City, a knight exclaimed, "Come, sire, come hither, and I will show you Jerusalem." Then Richard covered his face and wept aloud, crying to Heaven, "Ah, Lord God, I pray Thee not to let me ever see Thy Holy City, since I am not able to deliver it from the hands of Thine enemies." A deeper and more painful sense of inability to save Jerusalem from her miserable fate because of her own perversity oppressed our Lord as He gazed upon the

splendors of the capital from the brow of Olivet on the day of His public entry into the city, but this did not deter Him from His resolution to put forth every effort available in the few hours remaining to Him before His death to call to penitence those who would listen to His admonitions, and to give the rulers of the Jews warnings so explicit as to be unmistakable, so that the responsibility for the rejection of the Messiah and the consequent doom of their nation should rest wholly upon themselves. It was with this purpose before Him that Jesus returned early to the city on the morning after His spectacular progress to the temple.

The first acts of a monarch following the establishment of his claims to a kingdom are very significant. They indicate to careful observers the temper of the new sovereign, and foreshadow the probable policy of his government. Illustrations of this will occur to every student of history. Kings have frequently signalized their accession to a throne

by the punishment of their enemies, confiscating their estates and destroying their lives. Occasionally monarchs have shown commendable clemency, pardoning their foes and performing deeds of mercy to the more unfortunate citizens of their realms. It is with intense interest that we turn our attention to the earliest acts of Jesus after He had been acclaimed the royal Messiah by the Passover throng. The ancient prophecy designated Him as "just, having salvation, lowly." From such terms of description one would expect that righteousness, peace, and joy would characterize the inauguration of His reign; and these elements appear in bold relief on the first page of the record Jesus made following His recognition by the people in His true position, though that acknowledgment was but of momentary duration. The establishment of righteousness is inevitably attended by the utterance of judgment, and this was accomplished on Monday of Passion Week by the blighting of the unproductive

fig-tree on the way to Jerusalem, and the expulsion of the profane traders from the temple, where Jesus had noticed them the day before. The peacefulness of the Messiah's reign was typified, in marked contrast to the violence of His manner toward these desecrators of God's house, by His healing of the blind and lame who crowded about Him in the sacred precincts of the temple. The joyfulness of the kingdom was symbolized in the jubilant singing of children, who made the courts of the Lord resound with notes of praise altogether distasteful to the rulers of the Jews. Such were the events which marked the true character of Christ's sovereignty on the first day after He had permitted Himself openly to be proclaimed as King.

I

PLAIN intimations of the judgment which Jesus would exercise had been made in certain acts of Palm Sunday. The prediction of the catastrophe which should

fall upon Jerusalem, and the calm, judicial survey of the temple courts at the close of the day, had each prefigured impending strokes of judgment from the hand of Christ. To-day would witness the fulfillment of these indications. The Master had risen very early in the morning. Perhaps the excitements of Sunday had made prolonged sleep impossible. A soul so deeply sensitive must have been profoundly moved by all He had experienced that day, and His mind would be filled with the stern projects which He would put into execution with the coming of the dawn. The remainder of His days would be marked by heavy drafts upon His nervous energy, and His interest in His work would be increasingly intense. The quiet hours of the night would provide Him with the opportunity for meditation and prayer which He desired, and for such fellowship with His disciples as would refresh His spirit. We may reverently assume that after His comrades had fallen asleep He en-

gaged in silent communion with His Father, and revolved in His mind the high designs which had been committed to Him. That He did not rest in the beloved home at Bethany that night we may reason from the fact that He began His journey to the city without His breakfast. Perhaps He had passed the hours from dark to daylight in the open air within the territory on Mt. Olivet which bore the designation of Bethany. Having meat to eat that others knew not of, as He had explained on a former occasion, and being eager to perform the task He had set for the day, He had not tarried to take food, and probably was so absorbed in the purpose He must accomplish that He was unconscious of the needs of His body until the keen morning air reminded Him that He had not broken His fast.

As He hurried in the direction of the city, Jesus saw by the roadside at some distance a fig-tree among the palms which lined the highway, pushing out its broad-leaved branches

most attractively. Had it been the season when figs are gathered the luxuriant frondage would not have awakened any groundless expectations, for in that case the tree might have been already stripped of its fruit. But the time for the ripened product had not arrived, which raised the supposition that this tree, standing in a favorable situation, had been unusually forward. Now, it is a peculiarity of the fig-tree that its fruit appears before it has put forth its leaves, and it was natural to assume that a tree which exhibited such an abundance of foliage out of season was a precocious bearer of figs, from which a refreshing supply might be obtained. The unwonted sight sharpened our Lord's sense of hunger, and He approached the tree with the evident intention of satisfying His appetite. Finding nothing edible among its green branches, He pronounced a malediction upon it, and shortly after it withered and died; for when Jesus and His disciples passed that way the next morning they observed that it

had dried up from the roots. When at that time Peter remarked this wonderful miracle, Jesus explained to His disciples that this achievement was small compared with the apparent impossibilities which could be accomplished by those who had an appropriate faith in God. For the present it was to Him, as it doubtless became to them in later years, and as it must always appear to us, a symbol of the doom which awaited the Jewish nation for having made an outward show of spiritual vigor which they refused to fulfill in their actual lives.

With a strange perversity the critics of Jesus have charged Him with an inexcusable explosion of wrath against the tree which disappointed Him when He was hungry. If the incident were capable of this interpretation, it would certainly reflect upon the character of Jesus to His disadvantage, but no such construction can be placed upon this act without great injustice. The temper of Jesus was calm and judicial. The blighting of the

tree was for no physical profit to Himself or any one else, but for the instruction of His disciples and others who might become aware of it. In a sense, it was the parable of the barren fig-tree, which had been told on another occasion, presented anew in a dramatized form. It foretokened the judgment which would be executed upon recreant Israel.

With a kind of maudlin sentimentalism the cavilers have affected keen distress that a tree which had no moral responsibility should have been made the victim of a curse. This is to ignore the fact that a tree is not a sentient creature, and therefore incapable of experiencing any suffering in consequence of condemnation to death. It is also to make no account of the fact that constantly in all parts of the earth trees with nobler prospects are being destroyed for lack of genial environment, because of the ravages of insects and worms, or as a result of the lightning's fatal stroke, and this through the operation

of laws which are ordained by a beneficent God.

To say that Jesus was destroying property which belonged to another is to disregard the fact that this tree was already fit for nothing but to be burned. Had the owner witnessed its condemnation he must have approved it, nor would he have experienced any loss. The tree was incorrigible. It cumbered the ground. Moreover, the same retributive justice would soon be meted to the whole Jewish nation for a like reason. Shall we have the effrontery to say that God in this wronged His people?

In that ostentatiously false fig-tree Jesus saw the Jewish leaders flaunting their pretensions to godliness, and availed Himself instantly of an opportunity to rebuke their hypocrisy. He forgot His hunger in His eagerness to teach a great lesson and to offer a stern warning in a concrete illustration which could not easily be forgotten. As He hungered for the fruit of that tree, so He

hungered for the fruit of holiness from those rulers of the people, and found it not.

Retribution fell upon this tree, not for lack of fruit, for it was not the season of figs, but for falsehood. There was something contemptible in its challenge to the traveler to observe its fullness of life, when in truth what little vitality it possessed had run to leaves only. In this it was a frank type of the nation in whose soil it grew. The scribes and Pharisees were boldly vaunting themselves as trees laden with the fruit of righteousness, but on examination they were found to be barren of the very thing of which they boasted. The Gentiles in the world about them candidly acknowledged their lack of righteousness, but Israel preserved the form of godliness while repudiating its power. Such moral dereliction could not stand unrebuked by the Judge of all the earth. Jesus therefore gives the Jews a premonition of the destruction which threatens them if they persist in their impenitence. In this blasted

fig-tree they are to read their own doom in refusing to make good their fulsome promise of spiritual fruitage. The whole episode seems like a final effort of our Lord to startle those who were cognizant of His act into some realization of their guilt before they had fixed their destiny. If we feel that He must have known that He would find no fruit on the fig-tree before He reached it, then we perceive how eagerly He seized the opportunity to use it as a warning to the Jews; and on this supposition His conduct with reference to the tree is no more difficult of explanation than His continued appeals to His people to turn from their iniquity, though He knew they would compel Him to pronounce their condemnation. In any event, He must be free from the charge of having left them in ignorance of their peril.

A tree is an apt illustration of individual persons no less than of nations, and our Lord's symbolic act applies to the responsibilities of every one who professes a life of

godliness. From those who make no promise of righteousness nothing is to be expected, but the avowed followers of Christ who bring not forth the fruit of holiness draw down upon themselves a fearful reprobation. For the unprofitable servant is reserved the outer darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. That we have been plainly admonished of this is one of the evidences of Christ's perfect love for humanity. If He had performed only miracles of grace and compassion, we might have been misled into the conviction that He would not deal severely with sin. It is "a kindness in His justice" which must be estimated as the highest mercy. It is to our eternal advantage to see all the aspects of righteousness, and to remember that unfaithfulness will be punished as surely as fidelity will be rewarded.

As Jesus did not make the fig-tree barren, but only confirmed and concluded a course which had already been taken, so He is not responsible for the condemnation of any soul

to ruin. A life of falsehood commands its own appropriate recompense. The Judge of the quick and the dead merely speaks the word of formal determination. "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever" is simply the judicial declaration that the period of probation has closed. Character has attained an unalterable fixity. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."

II.

ON reaching the temple Monday morning of Passion Week, Jesus expelled the traders who were profaning the sacred place with abuses which were hateful alike to God and man, and by which He declared they had turned the house of God into a lair of robbers. His authority was feebly, but indignantly, challenged by the chief priests and scribes, who were especially angered by the cheers of the children, who were still repeating the hosannas of the day before. But

Jesus retorted upon His enemies by quoting a familiar passage from the Psalms, indicating that the plaudits of childhood were ordained of God to express the truth which the rulers had denied. The day closed with miracles of healing, proving that compassion as well as condemnation pervaded the spirit of the Messiah on a day marked by the execution of judgment.

Three hundred years before Jesus presented Himself to the Jews as king, Alexander the Great invaded Palestine and demanded homage of its inhabitants. The reception which they yielded the Macedonian conqueror shows a striking contrast to their treatment of Jesus, and was most gratifying to the monarch. Fear of the illustrious victor constrained the Jews to be obsequious to the last degree. Tradition declares that the whole population of Jerusalem, dressed in white, streamed out to meet him. All night long they marched toward the spot where he was awaiting their submission, preceded by

torches and accompanied by bands of musicians. At sunrise they stood before the king, who was so impressed by their appearance that he is said to have made obeisance to the high priest at their head, explaining that he was in this act worshiping the God of the Hebrews. Then Alexander joined in the usual sacrifices and cemented his fellowship with the Jews by promising them various immunities, and inviting any who were so inclined to serve in his army while retaining their ancient customs.

Had Jesus offered Himself to the Jews in a similar fashion, as a Messiah who would fulfill their ambitions for material advantage, and who would accommodate Himself to the traditions of their elders and to the religious conventions of their day, He would have received a like submission, though it had involved a painful subordination to His personal sovereignty. But Jesus came to them in no spirit of compromise or extenuation. He rebuked their sins, condemned their ex-

ternal righteousness, and denounced their aspirations as utterly hostile to the will of God. He now gave them a final token of His detestation of their ways, and concentrated the hatred of their leaders which had been slowly coming to its fury on the single purpose to destroy Him. As He had signalized His assumption of the Messianic office at the beginning of His public ministry by the expulsion of the sacrilegious traders from the temple, so again at the close of His work He would demonstrate His royal prerogatives by the same act of judgment with still deeper implications. In the full consciousness of the authority He had evidenced the previous day, He bent Himself to His task with exceeding earnestness.

The priests were driving a very lucrative business in supplying sacrificial victims to the throng which had come for the Passover celebration, as indeed they had been wont to do at all times among the worshipers who required their services. At this season their

opportunities for profit were greatly enlarged, and they were making the most of them. In addition to the animals for sacrifice which they provided for purchasers, they furnished exchange of currency to persons coming from the provinces. Nothing but the sacred money, the half-shekel of the sanctuary, was permissible for religious uses, and extortionate rates were charged to people, who had no redress for this fraudulent practice. This nefarious traffic had been brought into the temple enclosure, not indeed into its most sacred area, but into the court of the Gentiles. But Jesus was filled with indignation at this attempted evasion of culpability, for the temple was consecrated as an "house of prayer for all the nations," and the profanation was in no sense mitigated in His estimate by being confined to a place reserved for those worshipers who had not been born Jews. The whole sorry business, with its attendant noise and tumult, its commercial and secular character, and above

all its contemptible cheating, was perfectly abhorrent to Him. With blazing wrath He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who were trading in sacrificial victims, and swept the entire crew of vampires out of the place they had desecrated with their loathsome iniquities. So drastic was the performance that Mark says Jesus would not even suffer "that any man should carry a vessel through the temple."

As one reads this story, he thinks of Oliver Cromwell dissolving the Long Parliament and turning its members into the streets. There is no true parallel in these events, and one hesitates to compare an act of divine judgment with any human performance of a political character; yet there are resemblances as well as differences in these stormy occurrences which serve to illumine the conduct of Jesus. The Parliament that provoked the violence of Cromwell had outlived its usefulness and was a menace to the liberties of the English people. It was

at the point of resolving to perpetuate its existence indefinitely despite the public clamor for its dissolution. It had developed into an oligarchy notable chiefly for its interminable talk about technicalities and the feeble manner in which it wielded the power with which it had been intrusted. When Cromwell learned that, with but fifty members in session, it was proposed to force through a bill which would enable this body not only to retain its present intolerable authority, but to prevent the introduction of any members of a spirit different from that which now held control, he exclaimed, "It is contrary to common honesty," and leaving Whitehall, he summoned a company of musketeers, and strode over to the House of Commons, leaving his soldiers at the door. He sat down in the assembly and listened to the debate with stern impatience till the question was about to be put, when he sprang to his feet, threw down his hat, and began to speak. "Your hour is come," he con-

cluded; "the Lord hath done with you." Then with hot words he ordered the Speaker from his chair, drove the members out of the House, threw away the mace, locked the door, and took the key with him, having in that critical moment by sheer ability invested himself with the supreme authority of England. "It is you that have forced me to this," he cried, as he expelled the members from the House; "I have sought the Lord night and day that He would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work." This act of violence on Cromwell's part has never been justified on formal grounds, but it was approved by the people, whose constitutional rights were being invaded by the Parliament, and one can not doubt that it had the applause of his own conscience.

The rulers of the Jews who inspired the indignation of Jesus by their wicked abuses stood in much the same relation to Israel that the Long Parliament bore to England, for the national as well as the religious life

of the people centered in the temple to a very large extent, and the scribes and Pharisees were guilty of exercising their power to the detriment of society. The resemblance ought not to be pressed farther. Cromwell had an army at his back, and behind this an aroused and sympathetic public sentiment; yet was his deed singularly brave and mighty. Jesus smote the defilers of the temple single-handed and alone. No armed forces waited His command to undertake the overthrow of His enemies. His act was only calculated to inflame their ardor for His life. He was simply rushing to death, as He knew full well; yet He bent Himself to His task with the sublime courage which is born of a divine inspiration. To Him as to Cromwell, however, was given the encouragement of popular approval. Though the common people might be affrighted at the rashness which Jesus displayed in attacking the Jewish leaders, they were compelled to admire His devotion to righteousness which was sure to bring Him

to a violent death, while they secretly rejoiced over the punishment inflicted upon those who had oppressed them. This is doubtless one of the reasons why the rulers submitted to Christ's extraordinary rebuke. Luke tells us that "the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy Him; and they could not find what they might do, for the people all hung upon Him, listening." Had it not been for this, it is not incredible that the victims of His wrath would have stained the courts of the temple with His blood.

Another reason for their apparent timorousness probably existed in their own consciences; they knew themselves to be guilty of all of which Jesus accused them, and they were made cowards by that self-condemnation. Moreover, Jesus possessed such majesty of person that He could make His enemies quail with a glance of His eye, and fall back from His presence at the first utterance of His lips. The mob that went

out to arrest Him three days later underwent this experience, and the emissaries of the rulers who tried to take Him months before could only explain their failure by saying, "Never man spake like this Man." And thus the Master had His way and swept His Father's house clean of the polluting traders.

Though this was a definite act of judgment upon the Jews, it was also a symbolical deed capable of specific application to individual lives. It is one of the most solemn disclosures of the Christian revelation that human beings are temples of the Holy Spirit. One can fancy the Christ standing before such a shrine of Deity soiled and desecrated by unhallowed practices, and bending His sad and indignant gaze upon the scene of profanation, ready to purge it of the influences which have despoiled it of its sanctity.

II.

IF the temple was not a fit place for barter, Jesus esteemed it appropriate to the healing

of disease. Having turned the traders out, He brought the sufferers in. The lame and the blind crowded around Him after the sacred courts had been cleansed, and He cured them of their maladies. It was a beautiful exhibition of that quality of His nature which had been obscured temporarily by the wrath which had absorbed Him. It was a return to the habit of mercy for which He is, and always will be, best remembered by the world. It must have seemed like the joyous bursting forth of the sun after an angry tempest has howled through the sky and darkened the earth with its cloudy pall. The storm had swept the blue vault of heaven free of its black stains, and a mellow light glorified the world. Then it was that to the grateful expressions of rejoicing which broke from the lips of the poor and unfortunate whom Jesus blessed were added the sweet hosannas of the children, who could not forget the acclamations of Palm Sunday, and were delighted to shout the praises of the

brave and now serene Lord who filled the temple with the radiancy of His holiness.

But the chief priests and the scribes, who had looked complacently on the rabble which filled the temple court with the clamor of buying and selling, affected great distress that Jesus should permit the children to disturb the sacred place by their plaudits, in which He was hailed as the Son of David. It was this ascription of Messianic honor to the Galilean teacher which scandalized them. "They were sore displeased." When they asked Jesus if He had observed this unwarranted laudation, He retorted with fine scorn, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" These children were inspired of God to render homage well-pleasing to Him, and expressive of a profound truth. They were unconsciously fulfilling prophecy, and paying that just tribute to Jesus which the custodians of the Jewish religion were denying Him. Like the angels in heaven, they

bore testimony to Christ's sovereignty. It is a beautiful thing that from the lips of children, always dear to the Master, and designated by Him as best representing the kingdom of love He had come to establish, issued a proclamation of His royalty which the world is fast accepting because it is recognized as the authentic word of God.

Toward the close of the fourth century the city of Milan was torn by religious dissensions. Heresy had found its way even to the episcopal palace, but the misguided Bishop Auxentius was treated with much forbearance. When he died the people assembled in the church to choose his successor. Then arose a serious contention. No election seemed possible. Many days passed in fruitless struggles. The voices of the people grew louder and more angry, and a riot seemed imminent. In the midst of the tumult, Ambrose, a lawyer of character and ability, famed for his eloquence and learning, went forward to the pulpit to quell the storm.

A child, who supposed that he was preaching, cried out, "Ambrose is bishop." The distracted throng of disputants took this to be the voice of God, and shouted, "Let Ambrose be bishop." The more he protested, with blushes and confusion, the more insistent were the demands that he should submit to the will of Heaven. He argued that he was only a catechumen, and tried to make his escape from the building, but the people would not be put off, and eight days afterward he was consecrated Bishop of Milan. His administration of the holy office was so faithful and just that students of history are constrained to acknowledge that God did undoubtedly speak His choice through the lips of a child. And so it had occurred on that momentous afternoon in the temple in Jerusalem long years ago that through the lips of innocent childhood God had spoken, as on another memorable day from the opening heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

TUESDAY

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!"

THE THIRD DAY

A DAY OF SPEECH

Matthew xxi, 23—xxv; Mark xi, 27—xiii; Luke xx—xxi; John xii, 20-50.

"I KNOW that he can toil terribly," said Cecil of Sir Walter Raleigh. That encomium belongs to Jesus with a better title than can be put forward for any other man, and what He accomplished on the third day of Passion Week is proof of it. A comparison of the several reports of that day's performance leads to the impression that no similar period of our Lord's public ministry was crowded with more exacting experiences. From morning till night He was engaged in the process of discussing with friend and foe the most serious questions under circumstances of the

most painful character. It is probable that we do not possess the entire record of His speeches on this momentous occasion, but only those most striking utterances which would surely be retained in the memory of all who heard them. Yet the amount and variety of speaking which Jesus is represented by these condensed accounts to have done in a single day is astonishing, and we can not fail to observe what an immense strain of mind and body must have been involved in this ordeal, when we recall the earnestness of Him who endured it.

"While I live," said Victor Hugo, "it is my duty to produce. It is the duty of the world to select from what I produce that which is worth keeping. The world will discharge its duty. I shall discharge mine." Jesus could not be induced to spare Himself during any part of His public life, even by the persuasions of His most ardent friends, but in the last week of His ministry He seemed to pour Himself out with a kind of

divine extravagance. He was apparently intent upon saying and doing everything that love and wisdom could inspire to influence men to penitence and faith. From the fullness of His teaching and exhortation the world could not fail of choosing enough to save discerning souls. He would execute His entire trust at any expense. "You value life," said Benjamin Franklin; "then do not squander time, for time is the stuff of life." Into the closing days of His earthly ministry Jesus crowded deeds large and abundant, making the utmost of the opportunities which remained to Him, realizing as none other could the vast importance of time. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day," He said; "the night cometh, when no man can work." He was even then nailing Himself to the cross. As one reflects upon the expenditure of physical energy which characterized His whole career, the consuming sympathies which possessed His compassionate heart, the wounds inflicted

upon His exquisite sensibilities by the wickedness of His enemies and the misconceptions of His friends, the eager exhaustion of every conceivable effort to win a sinful and stubborn generation to the truth, one is impressed that, had not His murderers effected their hateful purpose when they did, He must have worn Himself to death in a short time. The cross on which He perished was but the rude and bloody instrument by which His enemies proved their guilt, and justified His description of their iniquities.

Let us remember that this is the last day of public service for Jesus preceding His culminating sacrifice. To-morrow He will retire to the sanctity of uninterrupted fellowship with His disciples, from which He will only emerge to meet His death. The events of such a day are charged with surpassing issues. They fall into three groups, as indicated by the accounts in the Gospels. Early in the day Jesus is forced into a contention with His enemies by their crafty attempts to

impugn His authority. Later He addresses the multitude with a scathing exposure of the hypocrisies of the scribes and Pharisees. Finally, at eventide He admonishes His disciples of things to come. The first two deliverances occur in and about the temple. The last is made on Mt. Olivet.

I.

FOR the third consecutive day, Jesus makes His appearance at the temple in Jerusalem with that calm dignity which betokens the consciousness of power, but which was the source of irritation to His enemies. His coming is a signal to the rulers to rally their forces against Him. From the performance of the day before they might have received the impression that Jesus was a revolutionist who would not hesitate to use violence to substantiate the position He had assumed. Nor would it apparently have been difficult for Him to mold the mercurial crowd to His purpose if He had entertained any such ambition

in His mind. But His was entirely a peaceful mission, and when on the morning after He had cleansed the temple He appeared in His customary function as a teacher, He made the plainest possible avowal of any plan to seize temporal sovereignty. The stern vindicator of order and honesty, who had driven the pilfering defilers out of the temple with every mark of vehemence, was once again the meek and lowly Nazarene ready to instruct and inspire willing hearers.

Still it was necessary, according to the misguided policy of the rulers, to suppress Him if possible. He was increasing in favor with the people every moment, and some expedient must be adopted for curtailing His influence, or the power of the scribes and Pharisees would be lost. Yet His very popularity made it necessary that whatever steps were taken to silence Him should be distinguished by great caution on the part of His enemies. Any false move might bring the fury of the mob upon their heads. Hence it

was resolved to undermine His vaunted authority by such a subtle process as should show no malice to the people who observed it. They would entangle Him with questions which would compel Him to compromise Himself in the eyes of the very persons who were now so evidently attached to Him.

History records that when the brutal and unfilial Nero had determined that his mother, Agrippina, was a hindrance to his fondest desires which ought to be removed, he was instigated by a former instructor to contrive a pretended reconciliation in public, to which she should be summoned to Baiae; and for her return voyage she should be given passage in a vessel designed to fall apart by the removal of certain bolts. Thus her death would be ascribed to an accident at sea, and Nero might make an impressive exhibition of his sorrow over the disaster. The infamous plan miscarried, for the boat refused to go to pieces when its destruction was attempted; but Agrippina only survived this

plot to fall into the hands of the pitiless minions of her son, who assassinated her. With a purpose equally sinister the Jewish rulers sought to involve Jesus in perils which would insure His destruction without implicating themselves as the agents of His death, but when their strategies were unsuccessful they found means to execute their conspiracy by brute force. All through the earlier part of this day they pursued the policy of entrapping Him with dilemmas from which they felt He could not extricate Himself, and when the baiting of the Master had merely served to increase their own discomfiture, they retired in grim silence with deeper determination than ever to put Him out of the way as speedily as possible.

First came the chief priests and elders, asking, "By what authority doest Thou these things, and who gave Thee this authority?" The expulsion of the traders from the temple was a high-handed proceeding for any man unless he could authenticate his deed. The

constant assertion of His right to lay down precepts for the guidance of life required better authority than His mere word, in their judgment. The challenge seemed to be made in all honesty and propriety. Authority was a matter of large importance with these Jews. The multitudes had frequently noticed the difference between the tone of Jesus and that of the scribes. The latter were forever quoting precedents. Jesus made His own. Edersheim says, "The highest honor of a scholar was that he was like a well-plastered cistern, from which not a drop had leaked of what had been poured into it." Jesus, on the other hand, was like a fountain gushing forth with perennial freshness and vitality. This fact had commanded the increasing admiration and astonishment of the common people, but it was not in any formal sense a satisfactory warrant to make original interpretations of the law and to indulge in independent actions apparently in disregard of legal authorization. The questioning of

His authority was a cunning device, which did not look so much like censure as sincere inquiry. If He had genuine authority, all would concede it the moment proofs were forthcoming. These certificates came immediately in much profusion, but they were of an unexpected and disappointing character.

Jesus blandly replied to these inquisitors that He would put to them a counter-question, and that if they answered it He would tell them categorically where He had obtained His authority. He then asks them whether in their judgment the baptism of John was from heaven or of men. They had counted on His affirming His deity, which would have given them an apparent justification for charging Him with blasphemy, a thing punishable with death. But this response threw them out of all relation to their malicious design. If they said that John's mission was divine, it was equivalent to the admission that he had prophesied correctly concerning Jesus, and to the confession that they were

guilty of repudiating the teacher whom they had regarded as a messenger of God. On the other hand, if they declared that John was simply a self-appointed prophet, they would suffer the instant revolt of the people, who esteemed him with deep veneration. There was nothing left for them, as they fancied, but to murmur in a cowardly spirit of evasion, "We do not know." And Jesus said, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." Still it must have been apparent to their bigoted minds that He had virtually indicated the answer to their question which they desired Him to give, yet He had couched it in terms which gave them no handle for an accusation.

The scribes and Pharisees had temporarily given heed to John's call to repentance, but had finally hardened their hearts against it, and hence Jesus now tells them they are like a certain man's son who said, when his father desired him to labor in his vineyard, "I go, sir," but went not; while

another son who had just as unhesitatingly refused to obey but had afterwards repented and turned to his duty, was a type of the publicans and harlots, who had never made any profession of godliness, and all their lives had been saying "No" to God's invitations, but had entered the kingdom of righteousness with avidity when John showed them that the gate of repentance was open to them. Or, they were like vine-dressers who had mercilessly beaten and murdered the servants whom an absent householder had sent to garner the vintage, and had finally killed his son, who had come on the same mission, supposing that thus they could claim the inheritance for themselves; for God had sent to the Jews teachers and prophets, and lastly His own Son, but they had rejected them all, and so were doomed to disaster for their unfaithfulness and crimes. Or, they were like men who had been invited to a marriage feast, but had returned frivolous and insulting excuses for not accepting the prof-

fered kindness, until the outraged host had flung open his mansion to the crowds on the highway, and called the good and bad alike to his banquet. With such parables did Jesus prove His authority over the souls of men and uncover the guilt of those who were seeking His life. It was a severe ordeal for men who had plumed themselves on their ability to catch Him in their net, but they had brought defeat upon their own heads, while through all our Lord's severity shone the light of love, for in every word He spoke He was reaching into their consciences to move them to penitence.

But the conspirators were not disposed to yield the contest in consequence of one overthrow. They were resolute in their wickedness, and they proceeded at once to form anew their lines of attack and to bear down upon Jesus from a variety of directions. Foiled at one point, they would assault from another angle, with the desperate purpose to carry the stronghold at all haz-

ards. First they hurled a combination of Pharisees and Herodians against Him. This group of inquisitors was composed of some young students in the rabbinical schools and certain ardent partisans of the reigning dynasty. They were divergent enough in their opinions to make a very effective alliance, for the Pharisees were Jewish patriots, while the Herodians were devoted to the interest of the ruling party. It might appear from the question they brought to Jesus that they had been disputing about the very matter to which they now directed His attention. They began very plausibly: "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man, for Thou regardest not the person of men. What thinkest Thou, is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" If He said, "Yes," that would end His power with the masses, who hated the tax of their foreign masters, and all who countenanced or abetted it. If He said, "No," they would

drag Him before the tribunal of Rome charged with disloyalty. As He came from Galilee, famous for its hostility to the government, He might reasonably be expected to make this reply. But taking a coin of the realm from their hands, He pointed out that their very use of this money answered their own question with reference to Cæsar, whose image and superscription it bore; while their own consciences would tell them of their obligations to God. There is no word upon the merits or blame of the Roman tyranny. They have submitted to it, as that denarius in His hand plainly shows. Now let them pay equal deference to God, and cease their wicked hypocrisy. There was no slightest chance of an accusation against Jesus in this retort, and "when they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him, and went their way."

Next the Sadducees, who were the inveterate enemies of the Pharisees, but were now instigated by them out of sheer desperation,

took up the task of discrediting Jesus. They came with a silly question about the resurrection, a doctrine which they ridiculed, and about which they had no intention of making a serious inquiry. They asked if marriage relations were perpetuated in the future life; if so, what could be done about certain complications which were certain to arise? And they gave a particularly difficult case of a woman who was married to seven brothers in turn. To whom would she belong in the resurrection? Then Jesus rebukes their frivolity and stupidity, and lays bare their folly in supposing that the life of the future could only be modeled on the life of the present. They are very superficial reasoners at best. Their denial of the resurrection renders their questions too insincere for serious consideration. He knows that their only purpose in asking it is to embarrass Him, but they will find out that the dead live again in good time, and thus learn the meaning of the Scriptures which they now ignore,

and the power of God which they now despise. The effect of this rejoinder upon the crowd was striking. "And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine."

When the Pharisees, who had discreetly kept themselves in the background during this interview, heard how Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they put forward one of their number, a lawyer, who doubtless prided himself upon his intelligence, but who may have been a sincere inquirer, for our Lord treated him as such. His question was, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" That was making a kind of theological test, and it was very pertinent in a time of much quibbling among the ecclesiastical doctors. In response Jesus gave that immortal summary of the law which embraces all the obligations of man to his fellows and to God. As another has said: "That one short answer to a sudden question—asked, indeed, by a true man, but really sprung upon Him by His

enemies, who were watching for His halting —is of more value in morals than all the writings of all the ethical philosophers, from Socrates to Herbert Spencer."

A pause now apparently ensued, during which perhaps the Pharisees were gathering strength to renew the attack, but before they could do this Jesus turned upon them with a question which finished the conflict. He had victoriously met their hateful machination, and now proposed to drive them to cover. "Whose son is the Christ, according to your interpretation of the Scriptures?" He asked. "The son of David," they replied. "In that case," He continued, "why does David call Him Lord? Is He both son and Lord?" They had been showing their fondness for enigmas, they had been plying Him with puzzles. He would have them try their ingenuity on this. But it was more than a Scripture problem; its solution pointed to the actual truth about the Messiah which they had blindly ignored. When the psalmist spoke

of the Christ as sitting upon a throne, he had no picture of an earthly monarch like himself before his eyes, but the vision of a spiritual sovereign occupying a celestial throne, and making the enemies of God His footstool. If sin had not blinded their sight, they would have perceived the Lord's Anointed in the noble person who then looked earnestly into their faces if haply He might discern any sign of repentance therein. But their hearts were adamant. He had only stopped their mouths. "No man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions."

Coleridge said of Sir Humphry Davy, "There is an energy and elasticity in his mind, which enables him to seize on and analyze all questions, pushing them to their legitimate consequences." This power Jesus manifested in His contention with the rulers on the last day of His public ministry in a preternatural degree, for it is clear that He

saw straight into the secret recesses of their hearts, and laid bare the malice of their thoughts. There was a grim humor in the situation which must have irritated those inquisitors to exasperation. They had begun the day with the expectation of driving Jesus into a net from which He could not escape, and of exposing Him to the ridicule of the crowd. They had ended by being pilloried as dullards and dissemblers before the very audience they had wished to propitiate. This was not because Jesus was disposed to be merciless, but because there was for Him no middle course between surrendering His claims and shattering the weapons which were turned against Him. It was a superb victory, but He experienced only sadness in His hour of triumph. He stood stronger than ever in the affections of the multitude, and the rulers saw their control of the people rapidly slipping out of their hands. This enraged them to the point of deciding that there was no other recourse for them but to

compass the death of Jesus by any means within their power; only they must await the most favorable opportunity.

Emerson says that "Jesus Christ will be better loved by not being adored. He has had an unnatural, an artificial place for ages in human opinions, a place too high for love. There is a recoil of the affections from all authority and force." That is a shallow judgment, which overlooks the fact that the authority of Jesus is spiritual, and His force is that of character, from which there is no recoil of the affections, so long as men love righteousness. Moreover, it is impossible not to adore one who shows such matchless mental acumen blended with such moral fearlessness as Jesus exhibited in the encounters with His tormentors which we have been hurriedly and imperfectly reviewing.

II

THE Dominican Friars were so relentless in hunting heretics under the inquisitorial

policy of Rome in the fifteenth century that they were called "Dogs of the Lord." The appellation might well be applied to the scribes and Pharisees in the time of Jesus, for they were not only devoted to the maintenance of traditional orthodoxy, but they prided themselves on the exceeding righteousness of their course in bringing to judgment all who deviated from the strict letter of the law. They had now set themselves to the task of hounding Jesus to death, and they showed a lupine voracity in the prosecution of their bloody project. The exposure of their hypocrisies which Jesus made shortly after His long contention with them in the temple is one of the bravest and most wholesome passages in the public utterances of our Lord. It cleared up the haze of falsehood enshrouding the lives of His enemies as an electric storm purifies the atmosphere of a sultry day. It was a searching diagnosis of the disease which was eating out the vitality of Judaism. It has been fittingly de-

scribed as "the great indictment," as well as "Christ's farewell to the temple, to its authorities, and to Israel." According to St. Matthew, who alone has preserved this bold arraignment, though detached portions of it are found in other Gospels, it was addressed "to the multitude and to His disciples," but it is evident that certain of the scribes and Pharisees lingered in the crowd and overheard the terrific castigation to which their class was subjected. At the most vehement point in His denunciations Jesus appears to have turned directly upon them with flashing eyes of judgment and tones of reprobation which must have thrilled them with remorse. The chapter containing the record of this scathing bill of charges ought to be read frequently by every lover of religious liberty, for it is a kind of charter of emancipation from the bondage of tradition and ecclesiastical arrogancy. Had the Christian Church been always true to the principles it enunciates, much bloodshed would have been

spared, much scandal to religion would have been prevented, and much infidelity would have been repressed. All haters of shams, all foes of despotism, should keep this remarkable declaration of human rights for constant reference, even as Alexander is said always to have slept with the Iliad under his pillow.

When we turn to "the great indictment," we perceive at once that Jesus is no instigator of rebellion, no reckless iconoclast, whose zeal for the rooting out of evil betrays Him into the injustice of condemning an honorable institution for the sins of those who have corrupted it. "The scribes and Pharisees," He says, "sit in Moses' seat," and their official deliverances are to be accepted as authoritative, in so far as they are in harmony with the divine law; but their glosses and additions to the precepts of righteousness are purely human inventions, and are to be judged on their merits. But, alas! the works of these guardians of religion do not correspond with their profes-

sion, and are not to be emulated by any one. They impose cruel and unnecessary burdens upon their victims, but do not lift a finger to relieve them. These champions of orthodoxy, these literal constructionists of the law, these grave interpreters of man's duty, are guilty of the most detestable tyranny. The office which they hold is most reputable, their manner of discharging its functions is most loathsome.

One of the most offensive features of their pretentious piety is the display which they make of religion. They parade their broad phylacteries and their enlarged garment-fringes as badges of an exalted holiness. They claim as the reward of their alleged godliness the most honorable and conspicuous places at feasts and in the synagogues. They are hungry for obsequious salutations in the market-place, and they are fond of being hailed "Rabbi." Religion is a mere profession with them, an opportunity for self-aggrandizement.

Then comes our Lord's impressive warning against a servile cringing before men who arrogate to themselves undue authority, unsupported by character or divine endowment. There is no master but Christ, there is no father but God in the spiritual realm. Keep clear with the Eternal, but fear no man. Let those who call themselves His disciples beware lest in the future they also fall into the same sin of self-assumed dominance over the consciences of men. He is greatest in the Kingdom of God who serves best. Let the lordly abase themselves, for only the humble shall be exalted of the Lord.

Perhaps Andrew Melville had this passage in his mind when he called James Stuart "God's silly vassal," and said: "I tell you, sir, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland. There is Christ Jesus the King, and His kingdom the Kirk, whose subject James VI is, and of whose kingdom not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member." It is a sentiment which promises well to all

who follow Christ in lowly simplicity, but which bodes ill to those who attempt to rule God's heritage with an iron hand.

It is at this point that Jesus turns upon the scribes and Pharisees who are sprinkled through the crowd, listening with jealous vigilance for any sentence which may give them warrant for suppressing Him with violence, and pronounces a series of "woes" upon them which must have filled them with unspeakable fury, but which ought to have driven them to their knees, had there been any vestige of penitence in their hearts.

Said Curran, the Irish orator, in his defense of Bond, "You may assassinate me, but you shall not intimidate me!" Said Jesus in every word with which He smote the hypocrisies of His foes: "You will crucify Me, but not until I have uncovered your falsity. You are like actors in a play, assuming for effect parts which are utterly foreign to your characters. You keep the door to the Kingdom of Heaven closed against those who would

enter, and refuse to go in yourselves. You make long prayers for pretense, while you are devouring widows' houses, covering your villainy with a show of piety. You have a passion for making proselytes, but you turn those you capture into children of perdition. You profess a loathing for profanity, but you empty your admonitions of any value by quibbling distinctions which permit gross forms of sacrilege. You make a great virtue of your tithing, which you stretch to include even kitchen-herbs, but you totally ignore judgment, mercy, and faith. You strain out a gnat, and gulp down a camel. You make the outside of the cup and platter clean, but you are defiled with rapacity and incontinence. You are like those sepulchers yonder, white-washed to make them more conspicuous, that the unwary may not be polluted by touching the dead, but harboring corruption within. You build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchers of

the righteous whom your fathers killed, and pretend that, had you lived in their times, you would not have been partakers of their guilt, but you are even now glutting yourselves with persecutions and resolving upon the death of the righteous. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? The whole accumulation of crime from the murder of Abel to the slaughter of Zacharias, whose blood stained the very courts of the Lord's house, descends upon you, and the penalty for it shall be exacted of this very generation."

One can reverently fancy how deeply Jesus must have been agitated by His emotions while He was uttering this truly terrible series of denunciations; but when it was ended He gave a still more impressive proof of the divine passion which was shaking His soul. With a burst of agony, which forced its way from His compassionate heart through all the indignation He felt for the hypocrisies of the Jewish religious authori-

ties, He sobbed out an apostrophe to Jerusalem, which is one of the most profound disclosures of the divine yearning for humanity's salvation ever given to the world: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate." With this heart-breaking cry, He turns away from incorrigible Israel, and bids farewell to the temple and its faithless authorities, saying with indescribable sadness, "Ye shall not see Me henceforth till in the far ages ye hail Me as the blessed One who cometh in the name of the Lord."

III

WITH the scene just depicted the public ministry of Jesus is terminated. Perhaps those scholars are right who insert at this point in the experiences of the day the obser-

vation of Jesus upon the act of the poor widow whom He saw casting her whole living into the treasury, as He sat over against the place where the devout were depositing their offerings. Perhaps also there is justification for the supposition that it was at this juncture that the Greeks who had come up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover were introduced to Jesus on their eager request, and that Jesus spoke those memorable words concerning His exaltation upon the cross, which indicate how deeply and consciously He had already entered into the final agony of His passion, and yet which show how fully He anticipated His ultimate triumph over the world through the power of His redemptive sacrifice. If this latter episode, which is only recorded by St. John, actually belongs to this place in the narrative, it adds much substance to the assertion that this was one of the fullest and most marvelous days in the whole life of our Lord.

The day was now declining, but it was

destined to contain another address by our Lord not less important than those which had already been given, but of quite a different character, and its audience would be limited to His disciples. He has much to say to them which the world would not understand. At the Last Supper on the night of His betrayal He will speak immortal words of farewell and instruction to those whom He fondly called His own. But even now He will begin that inner revelation which thus far He has withheld.

As they journey toward the Mount of Olives, which had latterly been His nightly retreat, His disciples turned to look back upon the temple which gleamed like a mountain of snow in the rays of the setting sun. They remarked with admiration its beauty and strength, but Jesus announced to them that this goodly fabric would one day wholly pass away. "There shall not be left here one stone upon another," He said, "that shall not be thrown down." When they had reached a

slope of Olivet opposite the temple, the silence which had fallen upon the group after the solemn prediction of Jesus was broken by questions which the disciples had probably been revolving in their minds during their walk across the valley of the Kedron. "Tell us when these things shall be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world," they pleaded. Then Jesus began, with His serious gaze fixed on the splendid structure of marble and gold that rose before Him in the distance, its massive walls and stately towers seeming the very embodiment of strength and stability, and delivered a discourse which in its details is still, after these hundreds of years since its utterance, one of the most difficult passages to explain in the whole compass of the Scriptures. The questions which the disciples asked were in their minds apparently but different phrasing of one question; for they undoubtedly imagined that the destruction of Jerusalem, and the return of their Lord,

and the consequent establishment of His kingdom, with its inauguration of a new dispensation, were all to be features of a single pivotal event, and they looked for this whole stupendous occurrence in the very near future. When Jesus took up their questions He discussed them in such a way that it is sometimes difficult to determine whether His words, in a particular instance, refer to the overthrow of the Holy City and the dispersion of the Jews, or to His coming again at the consummation of the age. The attempt to make the earlier part of His address apply solely to the tragic event which history has recorded for many centuries, and the latter part to relate to that event which Christendom has been awaiting for nearly two millenniums, is involved in much confusion. The fact seems to be that Jesus threw into the foreground of His picture of the divine judgment upon the world the catastrophe which was soon to fall upon Jerusalem, and in the dim background, stretching to distances

where objects fade into indistinctness on His canvas, the final coming of the Son of man. Before His own eyes the intervening spaces were all filled with definite markings, part related to part in one harmonious whole; but to the imperfect vision of the disciples the future was overhung with mists, from which emerged here and there a few bold features of the uncertain landscape. And while Jesus drew impressive analogies between the destruction of Jerusalem and the culminating event of this age, He did not intend to fix a near date for His second coming. On the other hand, He made statements in this prediction which, in the light of our better understanding, are now seen to declare that His coming will be long deferred. Though He describes the "signs" by which His approach may be discerned, He warns His disciples not to be deceived by the proclamations of false prophets who will affirm that Christ is here or there. "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, nor

the Son, but the Father." All that can be known is that it will appear suddenly like a flash of lightning across the sky, and that the duty of all is therefore to watch and pray, lest they fall into the temptation of listless and idle waiting. The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem has been literally fulfilled, and history records no more appalling disaster on its pages. The prediction that the Son of man will come again to judge the quick and the dead is just as certain of fulfillment, and blessed will those be whom their Lord when He cometh shall find in the way of righteousness.

As the year 1000 approached it became the almost universal conviction of Christendom that the world would then come to an end. This solemn persuasion was due to the fanciful interpretation of certain passages of Scripture which can not bear the meaning then placed upon them. Priests in all parts of the Christian world preached the terrors of the impending event. The churches were

thronged with praying penitents. Men forsook their merchandise and deeded their farms to the Church. They laid their money on the shrines of the saints. Commerce was abandoned, the arts languished, and the cultivation of the earth was forgotten. Civilization came to a pause, and the interval was filled with gloomy forebodings. Through every week of that year, and on every day, men searched the sky for tokens of the Lord's return; and the last night found hundreds of thousands kneeling in churches and cathedrals, and by the open roadside, awaiting the stroke which should signalize the swift descent of judgment upon the world. When it fell not, a mighty wave of relief swept over the bosom of humanity, and men and women went back to their former pursuits, some doubtless to lead more sober and godly lives, but many to take up anew the sinful pleasures which for a season the fear of judgment had led them to put aside. On a smaller scale such scenes have been repeated in various

parts of the world as often as misguided enthusiasts, following false interpretations of Scripture, have been enabled to impress their expectations upon any considerable number of their fellows. But the Master did not purpose to make any disclosure of the date of the age's termination. It is he that endureth to the end that shall be saved, and for the soul that realizes that the Judge is always at the door, the closing of one's eyes in death is the end which marks the coming of the Son of man, preliminary to that great day, hidden in the eternal counsels of the Father, when all nations shall be gathered before His face.

The parables with which Jesus accompanied this solemn address were in the nature of expositions of its meaning. Let none, He exhorts His hearers, be like that evil servant who, because his lord delayed to come, fell to roistering and lawlessness, and was rudely surprised in his wickedness; or like those foolish virgins who, because the bridegroom

tarried, slept till the midnight cry of his approach aroused them to the painful discovery that their lamps were going out, their vessels were empty, it was impossible to borrow oil, and the portal to the wedding was shut against them; or like that wicked and slothful servant who, being intrusted with the responsibility of one talent, made nothing of it, and lost all his life for his neglect. These were alarming words, but not a whit too serious in view of the judgment which the Christ would pronounce in the day when He should apportion the destinies of men. Then He would speak from the throne of God, and recompense individual souls according to their attitude in this present world toward Him and their fellows in distress; for if it could be shown in the final examination that they had fed the hungry, refreshed the thirsty, housed the stranger, clothed the naked, visited the sick, and comforted the prisoner, it would be affirmed by the Judge that these tender ministries had been per-

formed to Him, and eternal life would be the portion of those who had rendered this beautiful service; but if it should appear that they had omitted these Christly attentions to the needs of suffering humanity, it would be counted by the Judge as indifference to Him, and those who were guilty of this neglect would be condemned to irreparable loss.

The sum of all is this: The coming of the Son of man is delayed; therefore, be watchful. The coming of the Son of man is certain; therefore, be busy with the responsibilities He has committed to your charge. The coming of the Son of man is to judgment; therefore, be ready to give an account of your stewardship. The poet Browning has put the soul's duty tersely and well:

> "'Would a man 'scape the rod?'
> Rabbi Ben Karshook saith,
> 'See that he turn to God
> The day before his death.'
>
> "'Ay, could a man inquire,
> When it shall come!' I say.

The Rabbi's eye shoots fire—
'Then let him turn to-day!'"

The voice of the Judge rings down from the heights of eternity: "Behold I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

WEDNESDAY

"After two days is the Feast of the Passover,
and the Son of man is betrayed to
be crucified."

THE FOURTH DAY

A DAY OF SILENCE

Matthew xxvi, 1-5, 14-16; Mark xiv, 1, 2, 10, 11; Luke xxii, 1-6

IT is the ignoble fame of Caius Cæsar, commonly known as Caligula, "that he hated the very existence of any excellence." He carried this passion to such absurd lengths as to scowl upon the statues of the gods, and to meditate abolishing the works of great poets and historians from libraries, "because he could not bear that they should be praised." It was said of him that he commanded the death of a distinguished Roman citizen for the sole reason "that he was a better man than it was expedient for a tyrant that any one should be."

The hatred of the scribes and Pharisees for Jesus appears to have been inspired by like motives. His popularity with the masses of the people was an irritation to the rulers, who felt that they were being supplanted in public esteem, while His manifest goodness was a perpetual rebuke to their duplicity. And now that He had exposed their hypocrisies to the people in a speech of blistering accusations, there remained no possibility of retaining control of the multitude while He was permitted to live. An informal meeting of the Sanhedrin was, therefore, hurriedly called in the court of the high priest Caiaphas, to consider the means of putting Jesus to death by subtlety. It was the conviction of this assembly that no effort could safely be made to destroy Him while the crowds were still in the city. A popular tumult would be sure to break out if He should be seized during the Feast days, and Pilate's vengeance upon those who incited such a disturbance was to be feared, to say

nothing of the possibility that Jesus would escape from their hands through the devotion of the people to His interest. Hence it was resolved to defer action until the Passover throng had left Jerusalem, more than a week later.

At the very time these decisions of His enemies were being made, in the closing hours of Tuesday afternoon, Jesus had drawn His disciples about Him on a slope of Mount Olivet, and was saying to them, "Ye know that after two days is the Feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." While the conspirators were determining that it was impolitic to kill Him during the days of national celebration, He was announcing that His death was inevitable before the Feast should be concluded.

The giving of this prediction to His disciples must have been attended with much misgiving and pain on their part. The Master may have talked long and seriously with them about the approaching events, as

the day slowly faded into darkness, though the narratives of the Evangelists contain no hint of this. When the night had fallen upon the group they retired to rest, the stars of the Judæan sky looking down upon Him whose will had spoken them into being, and a company of weary men who had that day listened to imperishable words, and who on the morrow would await the signal of their Master to enter the closing scenes of a drama destined never to fade from the memory of mankind.

I

MIDWAY in Passion Week there was a pause in our Lord's activities. No record of His experiences on Wednesday has been preserved for us. We are left reverently to conjecture what were His probable occupations on that day. Tuesday had been a period of almost unexampled labor. Through its whole extent Jesus had been engaged in duties which were exceedingly exhausting to mind

and body. Now apparently He would remain in quiet seclusion, in preparation for those exciting ordeals which in a few hours He must undergo. If His disciples wondered at His silence, or were surprised that He remained inactive, they have not left any record which indicates it. One can imagine that Jesus was much alone that day, and that His disciples would respect His evident desire to retire within Himself. It was enough for them to be near Him, and to feel the silent influence of His sacred presence. If He now and then withdrew to some solitary spot, they would be considerate enough to refrain from breaking in upon His retreat.

There is a legend among the Arabs which declares that, in one of his marches, Solomon halted at the hour of prayer, instead of moving on with his horsemen. When he resumed his progress God granted him, as a reward for his devotion, the winds as a chariot and the birds of the air to fly over him as a perpetual canopy. One can not doubt that a con-

siderable portion of Wednesday in Passion Week was spent by our Lord in communion with His Father, or better, that the entire day passed in the atmosphere of prayer. Remembering how frequently in the Gospels He is described as retiring for a season of uninterrupted fellowship with God, we can not avoid the impression that just preceding the dread experiences of His betrayal and death He would long for the encouragement and inspiration of such an interview with His Father. There is no insuperable difficulty in reconciling the thought that this was a requirement of His nature with the fact of His divinity, when we remember that for the accomplishment of His mission "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." But we can not think of His prayers on this day as chiefly for His own refreshment. Indeed, this may have been the least of His objects in presenting His petitions before the throne of grace. If we could look into the history of His soul's outpourings

at this crisis we should doubtless find that His yearnings for the lost world were more intense, if that were possible, than any which had absorbed Him hitherto, and that His intercessions for His disciples and the world they would try to bring to Him were as tender and ardent as those which His comrades heard in the upper room a few hours later. In response to these offerings of His devotion the Father poured out strength and grace without measure upon His only begotten Son, under the power of which He moved on to sacrifice with a dignity and tranquillity unmatched in the records of human heroism.

Dean Farrar has drawn a fine imaginative picture of Marcus Aurelius, the philosophic and noble-spirited Roman Emperor, sitting in his tent at night, "on the borders of some gloomy Pannonian forest or Hungarian marsh. Through the darkness the watch-fires of the enemy gleam in the distance; but both among them, and in the camp around

him, every sound is hushed, except the tread of the sentinel outside the imperial tent; and in that tent long after midnight sits the patient Emperor by the light of his solitary lamp, and ever and anon, amid his lonely musings, he pauses to write down the pure and holy thoughts which shall better enable him, even in a Roman palace, even on barbarian battlefields, daily to tolerate the meanness and the malignity of the men around him; daily to amend his own shortcomings, and, as the sun of earthly life begins to set, daily to draw nearer and nearer to the Eternal Light." While it is true, as the distinguished author of these words suggests, that we shall probably search in vain through the records of heathen antiquity for a nobler presence than that of Marcus Aurelius, unless it be that of Socrates, who in some respects seems to have surpassed him, it must be clear to the minds of all that Jesus, confronting in solitary dignity the inevitable consequences of His devotion to righteous-

ness, meditating on the Mount of Olives upon the mighty issues of His public career among men, is a more imposing figure than pagan philosophy or martial prowess has ever produced in the history of mankind. He also was compelled to endure "the meanness and the malignity of the men around Him," expressed in baser forms than any other benefactor of humanity ever experienced; and this obloquy and contempt were directed against One who was conscious of no "shortcomings" which might furnish His enemies with an excuse for their persecutions. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" is the still unanswered question of Him in whom no fault was found.

The hours of that unrecorded day of Passion Week were undoubtedly devoted in part to profound reflection by our Lord. His mind explored those prophecies which related to His person and work. He traversed in thought the comforting assurances of the Scriptures regarding the final success of the

Messiah's mission. He rehearsed the occurrences of His public ministry, and made a mental forecast of the trials which were immediately before Him. He reviewed in advance the discourses with which He was to comfort and instruct His disciples on the last occasion He would be with them before His crucifixion. He fortified Himself against the terrible darkness and suffering which He must shortly undergo, and He anticipated the joyful triumph He would win over death, and the mastery of the nations which ultimately should be His through the world-wide diffusion of His gospel. With such thoughts we may reverently suppose Jesus filled His mind on that quiet day, and with others too deep for our understanding. The meaning of His divine self-abnegation swept over His soul, we may fancy, with a glory that no human words of description can express.

"I go to-morrow," wrote William of Orange, on the eve of a perilous undertaking, to Anne of Saxony; "but when I shall re-

turn, or when I shall see you, I can not, on my honor, tell you with certainty. I have resolved to place myself in the hands of the Almighty, that He may guide me whither it is His good pleasure that I should go. I see well enough that I am destined to pass this life in misery and labor, with which I am well content, since it thus pleases the Omnipotent. . . . I only implore Him graciously to send me strength to endure with patience." This subjection to the will of God by the man who gave the Netherlands their liberties is one of the most inspiring facts in the biographies of the illustrious, and exhibits that tranquillity of temper which was one of his most striking characteristics and which is only possible to one who confides utterly in Divine Providence.

It was with such an unwavering confidence that Jesus looked into the immediate future on this silent day preceding the closing events of His earthly life. His soul was at rest in God. His whole demeanor was

that of repose. A great peace had fallen upon His spirit. To-morrow He would begin His advance toward the cross. Unlike the Dutch hero whose words have just been quoted, He felt no uncertainty with regard to the outcome of His departure. He would return, but not until He had drained the cup of sacrifice to its very dregs. Yet no perturbation vexed His composure. He who had faced death in manifold ways, who had slept serenely in the storm which lashed the Sea of Galilee into fury, and who unmoved had heard the gnashing of His enemies' teeth when they sought to entrap Him in the meshes of their nets, felt no trepidation now in prospect of crucifixion. There was an indescribable agony yet to be endured in the garden of Gethsemane, but at this hour there was perfect calm from the surface to the very depths of His being.

What a contrast His silent peacefulness makes to the uneasiness and disquietude of the Jewish rulers, who are troubled with the

difficulty of carrying their dark designs against Him into effect! While they are searching their minds for some ingenious method of accomplishing His death without bringing public vengeance upon their heads, and are tormented with the fear that He may yet escape their murderous clutches, He is quietly and devoutly waiting the signal from His Father that His hour has come to yield Himself voluntarily to the blind instruments of His atoning sacrifice.

II.

OVER against this fair picture of peace and purity we must now hang a dark delineation of baseness and treachery. As soon as the disciples had heard their Lord's specific announcement of the day when He would be delivered over to His enemies, one of their number, who had long been balancing in his mind certain considerations of expediency, slipped away from the company, and, having

at last reached a determination as to his course respecting Jesus, went forthwith to consult with the scribes and the elders of the people who were debating the wisest method of putting Him away. In explanation of his conduct, it is said by one of the narrators of this event that Satan entered into this man at that time, and there is something so essentially diabolical about his deed that we can not doubt the truthfulness of this account. But we are not to understand that the Prince of Darkness took possession of him by one sudden and violent attack, but that the man had been slowly yielding to the blandishments of the tempter for a long time, and finally in a moment of desperate folly flung the door of his soul wide open, and gave the devil free and full admittance. The wretch who had plunged into this frightful wickedness was named Judas Iscariot, a member of the apostolic band, a man of much native excellence, who doomed himself to everlasting infamy because he dallied with

a temptation which concealed its hideousness behind a mask of justifiable revenge.

When John Boyle O'Reilly, in 1863, entered the British army for the purpose of spreading revolutionary sentiments among the soldiers, he probably satisfied his conscience with the reflection that in this way he was striking an effective blow for the independence of Ireland, the country of his birth; but the act was so contrary to those principles of honor which are held in reverence by the majority of mankind, that admiration for his daring is lost in reprobation for the immorality of his conduct. He enlisted in a regiment of hussars in Ireland, donned the Queen's uniform, and took the oath of allegiance for the purpose of betraying his trust and seducing his fellow-soldiers from their duty. Three years later he was sentenced to death on the charge of high treason, but the penalty was commuted to twenty years of penal servitude in Australia. He escaped from his punishment in 1869, and

came to the United States, where he took an active part in the Fenian movement for Irish independence. But, though he attained a good repute as a writer, it can not be said the stain of his treachery was ever effaced.

Judas Iscariot blackened his record with a deed vastly more infamous than that of this man, who fancied that devotion to what he regarded the interests of Ireland would compensate for treason to the British Government; and the consequences were far more tragic both to himself and to all who were involved in his dastardly performance. He had not entered the company of the apostles with the resolution to play the traitor, but had answered the summons of Jesus in all honesty and sincerity, and probably at some sacrifice to his worldly interests. But he seems to have had the false expectation that Jesus would set up His kingdom on material foundations to an even greater degree than the other disciples, all of whom were affected by this illusion. He

must have been a man of some commendable moral qualities, and capable of usefulness in the kingdom of God, or Jesus would not have selected him as His immediate associate. Being a man of evident business capacity, he was appointed treasurer of the slender funds at the disposal of the Master and His disciples; but having a covetous nature and being disposed to seek his own advantage in every undertaking, he soon fell into the sin of petty peculations, which were not discovered by his companions, but which gave him frequent uneasiness when he reflected that Jesus probably understood what he was doing, and that many of the Master's warnings were intended specifically for him. This consciousness of guilt and the likelihood of exposure would tend to make him bitter toward the victims of his crime, and especially toward Him who was aware of his embezzlements. From the time he began a course of thieving, his adherence to Jesus was based on the hope of satisfying his greed

and ambition under the misapprehension that our Lord would establish a worldly kingdom, in the triumphs of which he would be able to share. The teaching and work of Jesus apparently made no spiritual impressions upon him. His heart grew harder under the baneful influence of a stifled conscience and rejected truth. When he finally became convinced that Jesus had no intention of taking the opportunities for self-aggrandizement which were offered to Him, he fell into despondency, which deepened his resentment for the Master. He was disappointed that Jesus should refuse the crown which the enthusiastic multitude wished to place upon His head a year before the close of His public ministry. He was offended and disgusted when Jesus repeatedly spoke of apparent failure, and continued suffering, and final death upon the cross. It was to him a vain and unprofitable service for which he had been drafted. He had been deceived into taking up a career which led to nothing but

disaster. Jesus had taken advantage of his ignorance, and he smarted under the sense of injury. Having lost the ability to perceive the spiritual beauty of Christ's teaching, and the glory of His purposed sacrifice, he could only experience indignation and meditate revenge for his fancied wrongs.

The real character of the man came out clearly during the supper at Bethany, when Mary anointed Jesus for His approaching burial with the precious perfume. Then it was that he incited the other disciples to discontent, and asked why this waste had been permitted, when the money thus foolishly squandered might have been applied to the relief of the poor. "This he said," St. John declares, "not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." His utter misconception of the quality of Mary's lovely devotion shows to what spiritual insensibility he had reduced himself; and his sinister desire to get as much as possible into the bag

from which he was stealing evinces the lengths to which he was willing to go in order to feed his avarice.

From this moment he was confirmed in his purpose to abandon the seemingly hopeless cause to which he had attached himself three years ago. He followed the movements of Jesus thenceforth with a new concern. When the multitude made their stirring demonstrations on the day of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, hope of yet satisfying his aspirations for earthly splendors may have revived temporarily; but when he saw that Jesus had no intention of availing Himself of the opportunities which were virtually thrown into His lap, he sank once more into despair of material advantage through fidelity to Jesus, and abandoned forever the idea of maintaining allegiance to Him. Moreover, he saw that if Jesus had no purpose to head a revolution, and no ability to carry it to a victorious conclusion if He did undertake it, then He had by yield-

ing to the adulations of the people really played into the hands of Caiaphas, who would now have cause to accuse Him before the jealous Roman government of being party to an attempted insurrection. Judas was doubtless confirmed in his impressions that Jesus was a lost man when he beheld the expulsion of the traders from the temple. When this extraordinary performance had been followed by our Lord's terrible denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, there was no longer any room for doubt in the mind of the recreant disciple that Jesus was doomed to a speedy death. This was made certain when Jesus plainly declared that two days later He would surrender Himself to His enemies, and proceed uncomplainingly to the cross. Then Judas resolved to make the most of his familiarity with the movements of Jesus, and to take advantage of the difficulties in which the rulers were involved in their mad purpose to destroy Him; and thus out of the wreck of three years of disappoint-

ing toil to snatch at least a measure of revenge for the baffling of his hopes. Under the Satanic pressure of this desperate resolution, he hurried off to the priests and elders of the people to covenant the betrayal of his Lord.

The appearance of Judas Iscariot at the door of Caiaphas was most opportune for the consummation of this iniquitous design. The rulers were in a mood to treat with any man who would promise to extricate them from what seemed to be a serious dilemma. They could not hope to put Jesus to death before the Feast; the time was too short. They dared not do it during the celebration; the people would not tolerate it. They would have less chance of doing it after the festival, because Jesus would probably leave the city with His Galilean countrymen as soon as possible. Judas removed their anxiety with a single sentence, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?" The record declares that upon hearing this, "they were

glad." And well they might be. Here was a man from the very bodyguard of Jesus, as one might say, ready to place his knowledge of the Master's secrets at their disposal. It would be an easy matter now to seize Him without observation and to get rid of Him without the danger of a popular uprising. There was apparently disaffection in the ranks of this disturber; one of His closest comrades was willing to sell Him. How far this defection had spread could not be guessed. Perhaps it meant that the entire following of Jesus had begun to disintegrate. In any event, the fickle populace could be counted on to transfer its support to the victorious side. As soon as it was seen that Jesus was about to lose His life the crowd would forsake Him. The strategic move was to strike immediately, before the multitude could awake to the real situation.

Their eagerness to close with Judas was not revealed by the rulers to the traitor, however; they were too cunning for that.

They proposed to drive a sharp bargain; for they could well say that, if things were going so badly with Jesus that one of His own company was willing to betray Him, there was little need that any one should assist them in taking Him. Hence they offered Judas the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver, the legal price of a slave, with the probable expectation of being compelled to raise the figure, which the traitor would certainly spurn. To the astonishment of the rulers, and of every one who has read the story from that day to this, Judas accepted the amount named without hesitation. There is but one conclusion to be drawn from this fact: while Judas was covetous to the last degree, it was not avarice in this instance which wholly or largely determined his course, but jealousy and resentment. He had been fooled by a false lure into espousing the cause of Jesus, and, once in the circle of the disciples, he had not received the honor due to a man of his abilities. Others had been praised for

their devotion; he had been watched with suspicion and covertly denounced as a devil, his services being ignored, though they were of great practical value to the company. The consent of Judas to so small a bribe for his treachery is attributable, first, to the fact that he was eager to betray Jesus, and, second, to the feeling that he must show a more convincing reason to these rulers than jealousy. Moreover, he knew that they did not actually require his help; they could have taken Jesus without it. Hence he accepts the first offer proposed, and with the money in his hands shuffles guiltily away to keep his hellish compact.

Judas sold his Lord to the enemies of righteousness, and both parties to the transaction were unconsciously fulfilling prophecy. It is most impressive—this game of perfidy to establish the word of the Lord. Yet we are forbidden to suppose that these men were merely the irresponsible tools of the divine will. "Offenses must need come," such is

the resolute sinfulness of the human heart; "but woe unto him by whom the offense cometh." Neither Judas nor the Jewish authorities were driven by an inexorable fate to their cowardly crime; they yielded voluntarily to their own wicked propensities. Yet they insensibly contributed to the predestined humiliation of the Son of God to the lowest point of abasement attendant upon His self-dedication to the salvation of the world. He not only took the form of a servant; He was sold as a slave. And the price of the infernal barter was paid in money that had been devoted to religious uses, and by the hands of men who had been set apart to perform the most sacred offices of piety. To such degradation can formalism drag its victims through the persuasions of an evil heart, and to such base ends can the Holiest be consigned by those who surrender to iniquity.

It is ours also to remember that Judas really sold himself. Jesus was in process of laying Himself upon the altar of sacrifice.

At any time He could have been apprehended without the need of a betrayal. A little detective work on the part of the Pharisees would have answered every purpose. The rulers bought up Judas, rather than Jesus. They must have felt this, as they looked with ill-disguised contempt on the traitor. His treason simply added the element of convenience to their crime. They paid for increased facilities to murder our Lord; and Judas delivered himself into their hands.

Let us observe also that the rulers sold themselves, as men always do who corrupt others in order to gain an evil purpose. The bribe-giver is as culpable as the bribe-taker. He sells his soul for the satisfaction of an unholy ambition. History is full of examples of bloody men who have not hesitated to pay gold for the removal of an enemy or a competitor for earthly prizes. They have fancied they were buying something worth any sacrifice; they were selling something which is above price. Because of Israel's lapse into

hideous idolatry, it is written that they "sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight." So He must have turned His face against Judas and the conspirators with whom he was confederate. Whether in His infinite mercy there was given further clemency to the infamous ones, or in their darkened souls there was left any room for repentance, we can not tell. We only know that remorse led Judas to suicide—a proof that he had not become totally insusceptible of sorrow for sin; and that Jesus prayed on the cross for His enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

It seems, then, that no surroundings, however helpful to godliness, can save men from sinful lives so long as they put self-interest above the kingdom of God. Judas spent three years of his life in closest contact with the Savior. He heard His gracious words, wit-

nessed His wonderful deeds, saw His acts of pity and compassion, felt the purity of His character, knew Him to be innocent of every accusation brought against Him, and yet went from the table where he had been eating with Him to mark Him out for death with a filthy kiss. It would be beyond human comprehension, if we did not see its possibility suggested in the acts of men in our times. It has happened that persons have been induced to swear fealty to Christ for prudential reasons, who have felt no deep drawing to Him for what He is. They have been persuaded that it is a profitable thing in many ways to be a Christian. Outward piety is capable of being employed to advantage in the business world. There is nothing to be lost, and much to be gained, by a respectable life. The sanctions of religion are excellent recommendations to the people whose good opinions are best worth securing. The successes of the righteous show that it pays to be a churchman. He who is pious makes the most for

two worlds. So such persons as "the man of Kerioth," our Lord's defaulting disciple, may be supposed to argue with themselves. But when it is found, as frequently happens, that devotion to Christ entails the sacrifice of personal gratifications and provokes the hostility of an evil world, like the disappointed and resentful Judas Iscariot, they abandon the Master, and make terms with a wicked and perverse generation. Strange and terrible it is that thousands can not learn without the wrecking of their souls that the words of Jesus are literally true, "Ye can not serve God and mammon."

THURSDAY

"In remembrance of Me."

THE FIFTH DAY

A DAY OF FAREWELLS

Matthew xxvi, 17-35; Mark xiv, 12-31; Luke xxii, 7-38; John xiii—xvii

WHEN William the Silent, Prince of Orange, became convinced that Philip II of Spain had resolved to put him to death, he addressed a letter to the king in which he resigned all his offices and announced his intention of leaving the Netherlands for Germany. He had not long to wait for a confirmation of his suspicions of the tyrant's purpose, for he soon received a message from Philip's private secretary, who was his own secret agent, telling him that the Duke of Alva had been instructed to "arrest the

prince as soon as he could lay hands upon him, and not to let his trial last more than twenty-four hours."

A similar understanding with regard to Jesus was doubtless held between His enemies and their base hireling; and our Lord was aware that they would not permit more than a day to pass without putting into execution their murderous designs upon Him. Judas would keep his wicked agreement by betraying his Master at the first favorable moment. While Jesus had no desire to escape from His foes, now that the hour for accomplishing His decease had been indicated, yet He felt it necessary to proceed as rapidly as possible with all that He had determined to do before His death, in view of the impatience of His enemies to have done with Him. We are not surprised, therefore, to read that when His disciples on Thursday morning suggested the need of preparing for the Passover, He gave them immediate directions for that event. They evidently supposed that He

would eat the Paschal Supper with them at the time when all Jerusalem would be partaking of this meal, on the following day; but He soon removed this impression by instructing them to be ready that very evening. He would keep the Passover in a mystical rather than a literal sense. He would anticipate the appointed time for its celebration by twenty-four hours. Technically it could not be called the regular Paschal meal; but He would attach to it certain characteristics of the Passover, while imparting to it new spiritual significance; and thus it would serve the purpose of the national festival, and at the same time enable Him to fulfill all that He had undertaken before He was led away to execution. So much we learn from St. John's narrative, though the other evangelists apparently designate the Last Supper as the actual Paschal meal. The Fourth Gospel describes the event as occurring "before the Feast of the Passover," and this is confirmed by the statement that on

the following day, when Jesus was brought into the Prætorium, the Jews refused to enter "lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover"—a clear proof that it had not yet been kept. It was, therefore, on the very day of the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, and only a few hours before the Paschal Supper, that Jesus was crucified. He thus became Himself the Paschal Lamb, certifying the words of Paul, "Christ our Passover is crucified for us." This would give a sufficient reason for His antedating the regular celebration; in addition to which is the fact that He proposed to transform the ancient ceremonial into an institution of a more sublime and spiritual character.

Upon being asked by His disciples to indicate where they should prepare to eat the Passover with Him, Jesus gave to Peter and John, whom He commissioned for this purpose, a peculiar sign by which they could discover the person who was to make pro-

vision for their entertainment. On entering the city they would be met by a man bearing a pitcher of water, who would lead them to the house where a guest-chamber had already been furnished for their accommodation. This man must have been in good circumstances to place "a large upper room" at their disposal. It has been assumed that he was John Mark, whose mother is supposed to have lived in affluence, and that Jesus had sent him preliminary instructions. It has been suggested that our Lord's purpose in sending His messengers in this mysterious fashion was to conceal from Judas Iscariot the place where the supper was to be eaten until the hour for sitting down arrived, so that the traitor could not prevent the meeting. In any case, this end was served, for Judas was not able to consummate his diabolical plan until much later in the night. Thus on Thursday evening, according to our reckoning, the entire company, still harboring the wicked plotter in their midst, gathered

with their beloved Master to eat with Him for the last time before His cruel death.

A great theologian once proposed to have the Christian day of rest and worship transferred from Sunday to Thursday in view of the lofty associations of the last supper of Jesus and His disciples. The suggestion was never adopted, but it was inspired by a worthy conception of that day's significance. From what then occurred, one might reason out the whole mission of Christ to the world. In His mystical keeping of the Passover, at which He was both head of the household and sacrificial offering; in His institution of the Holy Eucharist as a perpetual symbol of His abiding presence among men; and in His valedictory discourses and final prayer of priestly intercession on that last night, He made such a manifestation of His true glory that it seems impossible to state the sublimity of that series of occurrences in terms great enough to express their importance.

I.

"WITH desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," said Jesus as His disciples followed Him into the guest-chamber reserved for their use. Even then, when the sacredness of the hour ought to have suppressed any disposition toward unworthy sentiments, the spirit of emulation, which had shown itself on several former occasions, broke forth into an unseemly strife as to who should be accounted the greatest. Perhaps it now took the form of a dispute concerning seats at the tables. It has been suggested with much plausibility that Judas demanded and secured the place of honor next to the Master, to His left and behind Him, as they reclined on divans after the Oriental fashion; while John occupied the place next to Jesus on the right and in front of Him, so that he could lean back upon His bosom, as the narrative declares. Peter was perhaps just opposite, so that he could easily

beckon to John when he wanted information that he was not bold enough to seek from the Master's own lips. The rest were disposed about the tables according to preference or convenience. When the disgraceful tumult had subsided, and the Supper was about to begin, Jesus arose, girded Himself with a towel, took the basin of water which awaited their accommodation, and went about washing the feet of His disciples. Peter was the first, apparently, to feel the humiliation to which our Lord was subjecting Himself, and cried out in amazement against it; but submitted to Christ's sacred ablutions when he perceived that only thus could he please his Master and be made partaker of those spiritual benefits which Jesus wished to confer upon him. The profound object lesson in this act of our Lord could not have failed to make some impression upon all of the disciples, and must have induced in them a sense of shame for their ignoble rivalry; but, that they might not miss the deeper meaning of

this lowly ministry, Jesus, upon resuming His place at table, explained to them that what they had just seen Him do was an example which they would be expected to emulate if they wished to be true to Him.

At the battle of Waterloo, Lord Hill pointed to a bursting shell and said to the Duke of Wellington, "What are your instructions, and what orders do you leave us, if you are killed?" "Do as I am doing," quietly responded the great commander. Jesus had plainly told the disciples of His impending death, and would later in the evening renew that proclamation, attending it with helpful instructions touching their work after His departure; but now He had given them an illustration of the spirit which must be infused into all their activities. "Ye call Me Master and Lord," He said; "and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have

done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than He that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

"With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," is a kind of pathetic interpretation to His disciples of His anticipating the time of the Paschal Supper by twenty-four hours, a fact which must have awakened some surprise in their minds. He had looked forward to this event with a tender longing; not that He might finish as speedily as possible the suffering and death which He knew to be inevitable, but that He might withdraw from the hostile world and spend a few short hours in personal communion with His closest friends. This undisturbed fellowship with those to whom He was drawn by the strongest human attractions would constitute for Him a calm spot in the center of the storm which raged about Him. It would make a pause in the grim

tragedy which was steadily and swiftly moving to its predestined climax. There would be joy in the very thought that for a little while He was sheltered in the affections of that group of comrades who had shared His trials for the last three years. These men had become very dear to Him and He could not leave them without speaking some intimate words of farewell and consolation which should reveal to them how precious they were in His esteem. He would gather up into one final message the deepest teachings He had ever given them, adding others for which they were till now unprepared, and supplementing all with explicit promises of further disclosures of truth by means of His spiritual fellowship after His visible presence had been withdrawn. He had more concern for this tranquil season than for any particularity in the keeping of the Passover.

Yet Jesus attached no slight importance to this meal as a true observance of the Passover, though it was not such a celebration as

precisely met the established order of the Jewish nation. The spirit of the institution was preserved, while its form was modified. Jesus shared the enthusiasm of every pious and patriotic Hebrew for this historic festival, which commemorated the deliverance of His people from Egyptian bondage and the beginning of their development toward national unity and greatness. This was almost certainly the first, as it was the last, Passover at which Jesus presided in person and Himself made the Paschal offering. Before the opening of His public ministry, His attendance at the Passover would be in company with those to whom He was guest rather than host. At the first Passover of His public life He had not yet gathered His disciples, and therefore could not sit as the head of an household. At the time of the second He was far away in Galilee, and did not come to Jerusalem. This was the third, and in it He presided over His own family, and symbolically offered Himself as the sacrifice.

The joy of doing this was another reason for His eagerness to keep the Feast, and a further explanation of His willingness to sit down to it twenty-four hours preceding the regular time of its celebration. If He waited until the next day it would be too late; He knew that He would be murdered before the hour when His fellow-countrymen gathered round their ancestral boards to eat the Passover.

But He proposed to transform this Feast into one which should celebrate a greater deliverance than that under Moses, and which should be universal rather than national in its extent. Indeed, He would supersede this hoary institution by one essentially different, though retaining some of the most impressive ideas of the ancient ceremonial. The Jewish Passover should give way to the Christian sacrament. He and His disciples would share the Passover meal together for the last time in which it could actually maintain its old significance. Hereafter others would keep it,

blindly following the traditions of the past; but they would be adhering to a custom which had been transcended by the New Covenant. As the sacred meal began, Jesus said of the Passover, "I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God;" and as He passed the cup to them, He said, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come." The circumstances under which they should eat and drink when they next came together would be far different than those which attended their present communion. Then the kingdom, of which He had so frequently spoken, would be established. At the moment of His resurrection He would be openly certified as King, approved by God and acknowledged by man. The constant celebration of the Lord's Supper would begin from that time, and continue till it was merged into the great Supper of the Lamb in heaven. Probably as often as the disciples ate with Jesus after His resurrection, they regarded the meal as a com-

memoration of the Supper in the upper room, at which He instituted the Holy Eucharist; and the followers of Christ in all ages since His earthly sojourn have gloried in the faith that He is mystically partaking of the sacred supper with them whenever they break bread in His name and drink the wine which symbolizes His blood. As often as they thus commune with Him they look away by faith to that perfected Feast in the celestial country, where they shall eat and drink with Him anew and forever in the kingdom of God triumphant.

While Jesus and His disciples were proceeding with their hallowed repast, the Master threw out intimations of the treachery which Judas would soon bring to completion. He declared that there was one dark spot in the Feast; an avowed friend would betray Him to murderers. "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me," He quoted. There was instant consternation among the disciples, and each of them

asked in evident alarm, "Is it I?" The traitor himself was among the most demonstrative of these troubled inquirers. Peter was eager to know the villain's name, and signaled John to ask the Master. "The beloved disciple" leaned back upon the bosom of Jesus and whispered Peter's question. Our Lord gave him a token by which to mark the traitor; "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it." Then, following an Eastern custom still in use to confer honor upon a favorite guest, Jesus offered Judas a morsel of food dipped in a sort of broth, which the ingrate accepted, thus turning the symbol of friendship into a curse upon his soul. "That thou doest, do quickly," said the Master under His breath; and Judas went forth into the night to finish his fell purpose. The disciples supposed that he had gone to make purchases for them or to give something to the poor at our Lord's request, for only John appears to have been cognizant of the words which Jesus had ut-

tered respecting the method of identifying the traitor; but our Lord's emotions at that moment must have been sad to the last degree. When He had sent round the table the disconcerting word that one of that very company would betray Him, it is said that He was troubled in spirit. He felt, as none other could, the horror of the crime which Judas was now to commit. He had no fear of death; but His wounded love, His pity for the sinner, and above all His sense of the spiritual abyss into which he had fallen who could engage his soul with such a frightful iniquity, filled Him with an agitation which He could not suppress.

Shakespeare describes Henry V as crying out to Lord Scroop, who has conspired against him:

> "Thou cruel,
> Ingrateful, savage, and inhuman creature!
> Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,
> That knew'st the very bottom of my soul,
> That almost mightst have coined me into gold,
> Wouldst thou have practiced on me for thy use;

May it be possible that foreign hire
Could out of thee extract one spark of evil
That might annoy my finger? . .
And whatsoever cunning fiend it was
That wrought upon thee so preposterously,
Hath got the voice in Hell for excellence;
And other devils, that suggest by treasons,
Do botch and bungle up damnation.

. . . . . .

But he that tempted thee bade thee stand up,
Gave thee no instance why thou shouldst do treason,
Unless to dub thee with the name of traitor."

Deeper abhorrence than this must Jesus have felt for the unnecessary, suicidal, and diabolical act of Judas. It is not surprising, therefore, that the detachment of the traitor from the apostolic company was accompanied with a profound sense of relief on the part of our Lord. The disciples had now been purged of a foul corruption, and above the distress which Jesus experienced at the terrible defection of a professed follower rose a feeling of joy that, despite the suffering and death which would quickly come upon Him,

He should attain a complete triumph over the powers of the nether world. It was under the inspiration of this emotion that Jesus exclaimed, after Judas had slunk away into the darkness, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

II.

IT is significant of the universal character of the religion which Jesus founded that the most distinctive of all Christian institutions, the Lord's Supper, is linked historically and sentimentally with the greatest national celebration of the Jews, the Feast of the Passover. To what extent Jesus observed the details of that festival at His supper with the disciples just before His death it is impossible to determine; but we may conjecture that, with the words, "I will not any more eat . . . I will not drink . . ." the Passover Feast was solemnly closed. Then it was that "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying,

This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." Thus did He inaugurate the imperishable institution known as the Holy Communion. It is grateful to one's sense of the sanctity of this sublime ceremonial to assume that Judas had withdrawn before it was enacted, though some scholars maintain that even the traitor, whose feet Jesus had doubtless washed a little while before, had at least a fractional part in this sacred ordinance, his exposure and hurried retirement occurring between the giving of the bread and the passing of the cup. This opinion is based on the theory that the distribution of the bread was made during the meal and the proffering of the wine after it was ended. It is enough for us to know that even the presence of Christ's foulest enemy could not vitiate the original institution of this holy service. If he actually ate or drank of the

emblems of Christ's passion and death, it was only to his own damnation.

Jesus did not leave His disciples in doubt touching the meaning of this feast of the New Covenant. "This do in remembrance of Me," He said; and in those words He threw a flood of light upon the institution which He had just founded. Whatever disputes may arise among theologians concerning the interpretation of the Lord's Supper, there is one reason for its existence so obvious that a little child could not miss it—Jesus desired to be held in the memory of mankind. There is a tender human interest for us all in this natural sentiment of our Lord. Apart from the deep spiritual values which He knew would attach to the reminders of His earthly life for those who should constantly bring Him into their thoughts, His heart instinctively recoiled from the idea of being forgotten. There is scarcely anything associated with the apprehension of death more disturbing to our composure than the

thought that in a short time after our departure there will be none to recall our words and deeds, or to remember what manner of persons we were. The marble shafts, the sculptured mausoleums, the chiseled figures which men cause to be erected above the dust of their beloved dead proclaim the eagerness for a place in the world's fading memory which is native to the human heart. Keats gave as a reason for the inscription of his "Endymion" to Thomas Chatterton, "Were I dead, sir, I should like a book dedicated to me."

It is related of Daniel Webster that he went one morning with a few friends to visit Westminster Abbey. He stepped into the "Poets' Corner," looked about him in silence for a moment on the solemn reminders of departed genius and greatness, and then put his hands to his face and burst into tears. Perhaps the man's soul was moved by the mighty vision of the past which swept in review before his mind; but it is more probable

that his emotions were stirred by the thought that after wondrous achievements the greatest of mankind must descend to the narrow house, while their successors take up their relinquished tasks and gradually efface their records from the memory of the living.

In the Last Supper Jesus instituted a rite which alone was sufficient to preserve His name from oblivion. Books are forgotten, kingdoms fall, pyramids crumble, and the proudest achievements of human genius pass away. The most enduring memorials are those whose foundations are laid in human hearts. On such imperishable structures did Jesus place the pedestal of His monument. In the oft-recurring celebration of the holy ordinance which symbolizes His love, Christ's disciples will make it impossible for Him to be forgotten. He has given a token by which He may be perpetually brought to mind. The manner in which He broke bread was enough to identify Him in the recollection of the disciples at Emmaus and on the shores of Gen-

nesaret. In future days, as they broke it themselves, they would remember Him and be consoled. Next to the visible presence of those we love nothing is dearer than some precious memento of the absent. How often, amid the darkness of a dreary day, as we sigh "for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still," do such memorials make vivid to our minds the companionship from which we have been sundered! These disciples would never gather about the table without bringing back to their imagination the vanished hand and the stilled voice of their Lord: and as often as the faithful in all climes and through every generation come to His table, they feel the tender touch and hear the hallowed tones of Him whom they delight to call their Master.

But this memorial was not only designed to keep the person of Jesus in perpetual recollection, but also, and more particularly, His mission and consequent sacrifice. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,"

said Christ, "ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Jesus based His claim to the love of men on the fact of His death in their behalf. It was their sin which impelled Him to this sacrifice. He ordained an institution which would prevent the world from forgetting these supremely important truths. Christian ministers may become recreant to their duty of preaching the gospel in purity and simplicity; Churches may lose their spiritual ardor through too intimate fellowship with the world, and the custodians of the faith may poison the minds of men with false teaching; but if they still continue to spread the table of the Lord, and to repeat the sacred words of Christ at the time He established the rite which perpetuates the memory of His devotion to death, the foundations of our holy religion will stand secure. For men will be ever asking, as the Hebrews did of their fathers concerning the Passover from generation to generation, "What mean ye by this service?" The answer to that

question will draw careless Christians and impenitent worldlings back to the atonement of Christ for man's sin, bringing them up before the appalling revelation of their own unrighteousness, and the amazing love of the Savior who died to redeem them from all iniquity. The low views of sin's enormity now current will be corrected when men see the profound significance of the ordinance which they often keep with superficial observance.

Furthermore, this memorial was intended to be an imperishable reminder of the oneness of Christian believers through faith in the same Lord, and participation in a common salvation. Whatever artificial distinctions may be recognized in respect of social relations among the followers of Christ, they are truly of one family at the table of the Lord. God is the Father of all, Christ is the Brother of all, and "the blood of the everlasting covenant" has touched and united all in the experience of pardoned sins. So

Paul explained this beautiful symbolism, when he wrote: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one Bread." Ideally the fraternity of the disciples of Jesus is the closest the world has ever known, and wherever a clear conception of the significance of the Lord's Supper exists, the spirit of perfect brotherhood will be practically exemplified. The Christian wears no insignia visible to the eye of sense. The veteran of a hundred battles may proudly adorn himself with the medals he has won for valorous service in defense of his country; but the sacraments of the Church are the only external marks of Christian fealty, save the graces of a Christly character and conduct. Baptism is the outward sign of the new birth in Christ, and the Lord's Supper symbolizes the mystical union of all believers

with one another and with their Savior through a common participation in the benefits of His gracious atonement. It is true that men may be touched by the holy water of baptism, and may drink the sacred wine of the Communion, without having experienced the saving power which these rites represent; but this sad possibility does not stand against the validity of these ordinances in the lives of those who are true and faithful, any more than the decorations of the brave soldier are diminished in glory because they are sometimes worn by persons unworthy to possess them.

A picturesque and touching ceremony was performed at Port Arthur not long ago, which has been called "the peaceful epilogue of a great military drama." On the initiative of the Japanese, a collective monument was erected above the remains of the Russian defenders slain in the siege of Port Arthur. Many of these soldiers had only received provisional burial on the spot where

they fell, the place being simply marked by a cross of wood or uncarved stone. For convenience in protecting their bodies from the ravages of vandals, as well as for the purpose of rendering appropriate honors to the brave, the collective tomb was made and dedicated in the presence of mingled representatives of the Russian and Japanese Governments. The wounds and scars of conflict were still visible on the bodies of some of the participants in the ceremony. This consisted of military honors performed by the most famous of the Japanese regiments, whose torn and bloody banner—the same which had been riddled by the shots of the dead Russians—was lowered before the tomb; a religious consecration by the Bishop of Peking, and salutes by the envoys, who in pairs mounted the steps of the tomb, the Russians making the sign of the cross, the Japanese bowing low. Then there were impressive greetings between the generals of the two nations, while the Russian soldiers cheered for

the brave Japanese army, and the Japanese cheered for the brave Russian dead. Thus in the fellowship of veneration for the valor of those who had given their lives to prove their loyalty to the cause for which they contended, these men of opposing nations forgot their differences and united to celebrate the heroism of departed warriors.

In nobler fashion the divided forces of Christendom, too frequently massed against one another in deadly conflict over theological tenets or questions of ecclesiastical order, gather about the Lord's table, the indestructible monument of the Savior's sacrifice for humanity, and, putting aside the contentions which have marred their peace and soiled the records of the Church, unite in celebrating the deathless love of Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer.

But our Lord indicated still deeper meanings for the institution He founded in the upper room on that last night before His execution. The words employed in the dis-

tribution of the bread and the wine are sufficient proof of this: "Take, eat; this is My body. . . . Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood." What fierce battles have been waged over these sentences! How has the very body of Christ been rent in the struggle to establish unimportant theological positions regarding them! What scandals upon the faith of Christendom might have been prevented if the followers of our Lord had only remembered the warning of Jesus who, when He was treating the very truths which later He was to embody in this holy sacrament, said to those who were perplexed by His teachings: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." It is a solemn charge He laid that day upon the whole of humanity: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." But no revolting doctrine of literality can be tolerated as an in-

terpretation of these words, or of the sentences which Jesus used at the Last Supper. Yet whenever we speak of this institution of the Lord's Supper as a sacrament, we suggest that in the very act of taking the bread and the wine we do in a mystical, but none less real, sense appropriate to ourselves the vitality of Him who called Himself "the Life," provided that faith in Him be truly exercised at the moment of eating and drinking. "Feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving," are the time-hallowed words of administration; and an appropriate commentary on these syllables is the petition of the Ritual, "Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat of the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that we may live and grow thereby." And thus the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not only a type of the continuous spiritual participation of believers in the life of the Son of God, but also a distinct and invaluable means of grace by which this identification with Him

may be realized in the soul. What a solemn mystery is hidden in this beautiful Supper of our Lord; what sublimity in the symbol He gave His disciples in all ages on "the same night in which He was betrayed!"

III.

"I AM going to die to-day," cried Mirabeau, the stormy genius of the French Revolution, as he bade a friend open the window of his chamber. "I am going to die to-day. Sprinkle me with flowers, fill the air with music and perfume, so that I can sink quietly into everlasting sleep." He was given a soothing potion, his head drooped, and he was gone. "I am going to die before another sunset," exclaimed Jesus to His disciples in the upper room where He had been supping with them for the last time. "Little children, yet a little while only can I be with you, and whither I go, ye can not come now; but later ye shall follow Me." In this way our Lord begins

His wondrous farewell discourses, which have been the recourse of the disconsolate for all the centuries since He went away. There is no suggestion of an everlasting sleep in His words, but the most definite affirmations of a future life, from which this world is separated by the thinnest of veils. He will go to death without repinings, but also without grandiloquent sentiments on His lips. It is an important hour, and He will crowd it with instructions and consolations which His disciples can never forget, and which will descend to the whole company of their successors in all ages with inspiring helpfulness.

History records that, after Seneca had been condemned to death by the bloodthirsty Nero, he had his veins opened, and called for amanuenses, who took down his dying admonitions as his life-blood ebbed away. Socrates in his prison under sentence of death spent his closing hours in high discourse upon the immortality of the soul. Jesus, knowing that in a few hours He should go to

a cruel death, delivered a final message to His disciples which is destined to survive the wrecks of time. The last utterances of Seneca, as recorded by his secretaries, were extant as late as the time of Tacitus, but subsequently disappeared forever. St. John kept Christ's farewell address in his memory, and his report of it is one of the finest things in literature. Socrates sought to establish the truth of immortality on philosophic grounds. Jesus affirmed it as a revelation on His own authority. Seneca and Socrates passed into the shadows with no promise of return. Jesus said: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

The order in which Jesus proceeded in His final message was largely determined by the needs of His disciples as expressed in the questions they proffered, and arose out of the circumstances of the hour. Upon His announcing after the withdrawal of Judas that His own departure was at hand, Peter

protested earnestly that his Lord must not go alone, evidently missing the significance of Christ's words. But Jesus admonished him that it was impossible for him to accompany his Master, and that if it were, he would not have the requisite strength for the journey, for he would weakly deny his Lord before daybreak. It thus became clear that Jesus was actually going to pass through severe suffering to death. The first demand, therefore, was for consolation in prospect of the inevitable separation, and Jesus administered it in words of deathless power: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." It is a home to which He is departing, and a home to which He will finally transport them. The assurance was for all generations, and not merely for these disciples. Many have felt the loneliness and strangeness of the world described by Watson:

"On from room to room I stray,
Yet my host can ne'er espy,
And I know not to this day
Whether guest or captive I.

"So, between the starry dome
And the floor of plains and seas,
I have never felt at home,
Never wholly been at ease."

Jesus has set that disquietude at rest. Pilgrims and strangers on this earth we may be, but the lights of the Father's house twinkle in the distance. "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

The way thither, Jesus told His disciples, they would have no difficulty in finding; and when Thomas, speaking for them all, complained that they did not know the way, for they were still in doubt as to the destination, He spoke those immortal words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and assured them that the path to the Father's house lay through Him. "Ah, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," exclaims Philip, spokesman

for the whole group now, as his comrade had been a moment before. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also," is the response of our Lord, and He bids them take that profound truth on His bare word, or if that is impossible, to believe for the sake of the very works which they have seen Him perform.

These words introduce another element of consolation. It is true that He is going away, but the works which have authenticated His ministry will not cease. "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father." The Master would withdraw, but the disciples would continue His work under freer and more promising conditions than He had experienced. Moreover, they would have His intercession with the Father in their behalf, and power to accomplish stupendous tasks would be poured out to them on the demand of faith.

A further word of comfort is pronounced when Jesus assures His disciples that His own spiritual presence shall attend them, notwithstanding His departure to the Father's house. "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you," He says. The world will not be aware of His advent to the circle of His own, whom He loves; but to those who respond to His love He will manifest Himself unmistakably and with much helpfulness. This promise is a deep mystery to Jude, who fancies that perhaps after all Jesus will make such a demonstration as will set up His Kingdom with much power; but how can this be done without the observation of the world? The truth of personal spiritual fellowship is further elucidated, and the disciples permit Jesus to proceed without interruption for some time.

When Rufus Choate sailed to the port where he died, a friend said to him, "You will be here a year hence." "Sir," replied the great lawyer, "I shall be

here a hundred years hence, and a thousand years hence." Did he mean that death itself could not deprive him of the power to project himself from the invisible world to this earthly abode, or that the influence of his personality would perpetuate itself in human society centuries after he had disappeared from the view of man? Jesus signified His purpose to keep in constant communion with His disciples, and to direct their lives by His unfailing counsels. Therefore He could bid them be at rest in their minds, and face the pain of apparent separation with equanimity. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

At this point Jesus gave the signal for leaving the table where He had lingered with His disciples after supper. "Arise, let us go hence," said He. Perhaps it was then that the company joined in singing the "hymn" which the narrative says they sent up to

Heaven before they proceeded to the Mount of Olives. This was probably the second portion of the Hallel comprising Psalms cxv to cxviii. That picture of Jesus singing in the shadows of approaching agony and death, standing in the midst of His faithful but sorrowing disciples, is one of the most impressive scenes in His wonderful history. What an inspiration it affords disconsolate hearts when it is remembered! It would have been uplifting to hear the song of David in the mouth of the cave, when pursued and hunted like an animal by his enemies; of Paul and Silas, chained in the prison of Philippi; of the martyrs in the Colosseum, and the Christians hiding in the Catacombs; of Augustine and his monks making their advance into England; of the angels hovering over the plains of Bethlehem. But far more thrilling must it have been to hear the Christ singing the praise of God in that upper room just on the eve of His cruel death. That divine melody we may hear, amid the tumult of the

world's sorrow and sin, as often as we are ready to turn our spiritual senses toward Him whose voice sounds over land and sea, calling men to trust and courage.

Perhaps it was when Jesus and His disciples had reached the open court of the house in which they had assembled that He resumed His address, taking up the beautiful symbol of the vine and the branches as a figure of the vital union which must subsist between Christ and His adherents, if they are to perform their divine function of producing fruit to the glory of God. From this He passes naturally to the type of loving fellowship which must thrive among themselves, both as a consequence of their union with Him, and as a means of presenting an invincible force to the hostile world. They are friends, not servants; yet the highest friendship shows itself in the deepest servitude. Love will conquer the world.

But they are not to confront a wicked and perverse humanity alone. The Comforter,

the Advocate, the Paraclete, which is the Holy Spirit, will testify of the Christ, so Jesus assures His disciples. He will convince the world "of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." They will be called upon to suffer persecution, but the Holy Spirit will vindicate them, for He will confirm their testimony. Moreover, by His administration they shall be led into all the truth. The memory of what Jesus has taught them will be made vivid and certain, and disclosures of truth which hitherto were impossible because of their own spiritual immaturity would be made to illumine their understanding, and to equip them for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Jesus now returned to personal consolations, and told them that, though they would be plunged into grief by His departure, their sorrow would soon be changed into joy; for they would see Him again. From that hour they should make all their requests of the Father in His name, and the extent of the

blessings He would bestow upon them would be measured only by the faith they exercised. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "These things I have spoken unto you," Jesus concludes, "that in Me ye might have peace."

A recent writer relates a conversation he once had with Herbert Spencer, in which he expressed the sense of personal obligation which he felt toward the author of "First Principles," and asserted that he intended in the next two or three years to read all that Spencer had produced. "What have you read of mine?" asked the philosopher. When he was told, he said, "Then I should say you have read quite enough." He was silent a moment, and then added, "I have passed my life in beating the air." That is doubtless an appropriate confession for the distinguished agnostic, who found truth increasingly difficult to apprehend. But how infinitely far it is from the feeling of Jesus

at the close of His earthly life. Apparently baffled at every step by conscienceless enemies who sought to neutralize all His influence, and finally crushed to death by their murderous hate, He yet spoke as one flushed with magnificent victories, promising unending conquests to His faithful followers. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

When He had finished these valedictory consolations and instructions, Jesus "lifted up His eyes to Heaven," and offered a prayer of priestly intercession, first for His disciples, and then for all who should be brought to faith in Him through their words, accompanied by petitions for Himself, that He might perfectly manifest the glory of God; the whole constituting the sublimest appeal to God ever phrased in human speech. To paraphase it, or even to comment upon it, however devoutly, gives one the sense of dealing coldly and profanely with that which is too holy for analysis and interpretation.

"That prayer of love and agony should only be read when one is alone, on his knees and in tears," said a saintly Christian. Let us study it thus, and let our spirits rise to the unspeakable glory of the truth, that in the petitions offered by our Lord at that supreme hour each of us who confess His name and look for His appearing had personal mention before the throne of eternal Love.

FRIDAY

"It is finished."

THE SIXTH DAY

GOOD FRIDAY

A Day of Suffering and Sacrifice

Matthew xxvi, 36—xxvii, 1-61; Mark xiv, 32—xv; Luke xxii, 39—xxiii; John xviii—xix.

"FRIDAY has always been my fortunate day," said Louis XIII, when dying. "On that day I have undertaken assaults that I have carried. I have even gained battles. I should have liked to die on Friday." Whether the French monarch attached any large importance to the sixth day in the week as that whereon our Lord finished His earthly life is unknown; but on that day the Christ achieved the most glorious triumph recorded in history—through death He vanquished death. The resurrection which

followed was the inevitable consequence of His divinity; it was the seal and certificate of His victory over the powers of darkness. But the crucifixion was the final and decisive contest in which He overthrew the enemy of man's peace, and bestowed a free and full redemption upon all who will accept His infinite bounty; for while "the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

That a day fraught with such immeasurable consequences should have been kept as a sacred memorial from the earliest Christian centuries, and called Good Friday in recognition of the eternal benefits derived from the sacrifice of Christ, is altogether fitting. The commemoration was sometimes known as the Passover of the Crucifixion, and the day was observed as a strict fast. Only the most plaintive music was sung, no bells were rung, and lights were extinguished. The Lord's Supper was celebrated; but the communion tables and reading desks were

stripped of all adornments, and the Gospel of St. John was read because he was so full and faithful a witness of our Lord's passion. In the fourth century every Friday became a religious day, and has remained such to this hour for a large part of Christendom. There is much appearance of propriety in this custom; for Sunday no more surely commemorates the resurrection of Jesus than Friday His crucifixion.

It is a short cycle of intensest suffering which this day presents to our thought, and it can not be reviewed without pain to the devout believer in Jesus Christ, who will remember that the sorrows of this dreadful space of time were but the highly dramatic epitome of sacrifices which began with our Lord's assumption of human nature to accomplish man's redemption from sin, and which may be said to continue while any for whom He died remain unresponsive to His love. Into the mystery of that suffering we can not look with the expectation of making

its meaning fully clear to our reason. It must suffice us to know that, "it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering;" for in no other way could He have been adapted to the vast mission of winning the world to God.

The sufferings of our Lord on Good Friday are arranged, according to the narratives which describe them, around three central positions: in and about the garden of Gethsemane, before the tribunals which condemned Him, and on the cross where He was slain.

I

'T is midnight; and on Olive's brow
The star is dimmed that lately shone;
'T is midnight; in the garden now
The suffering Savior prays alone.

THE night was far advanced when Jesus finished the sublime prayer with which He had concluded His farewell instructions and

consolations to His disciples, and according to the Jewish reckoning a new day had long since begun. He led His sorrowful followers across the Kedron to a familiar spot on the Mount of Olives in an olive garden called Gethsemane, which had probably often furnished a quiet retreat for our Lord and His company. Eight of the disciples were now stationed by Jesus near the entrance to the garden, which was doubtless enclosed with a wall. The three others, Peter, James, and John, were taken by the Master into the depths of the grove, and a little apart from them Jesus withdrew to pray. Two emotions, singularly human, appear in this act: first, Jesus craved the sympathy and companionship of those men who had been closest to Him through all His public ministry, and had been admitted to some of the most sacred experiences of His life; and then, as the awful burden of His sorrow pressed upon Him, He longed to be alone with a grief that could not be shared by any

but God. But there was also in this retirement a revelation of the uniqueness of His personality: His disciples could not participate in His prayer. They never had. He had prayed for them, and in a sense with them; but they had not prayed with Him, and surely could not pray for Him. It was His custom to pray alone, as the Evangelists show us in their stories of His life; and while He craved the support of their watchfulness near Him, it was inevitable that in such an hour as this He should be alone.

Into the mystery of that prayer, some petitions of which burst from His lips with such intensity as to be heard by His sleep-heavy disciples, we can not enter. The utmost we can fathom is, that the Savior felt the horror of His situation so profoundly that His human anguish broke all bounds of endurance, and forced itself out repeatedly in the cry, "O, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me!" But as often as His intolerable distress made Him appeal for

relief, His divine obedience impelled Him to say, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." The strain of such an agony could not have been long endured without imperiling life; great drops of bloody sweat were pressed from His brow, and dropped to the earth; an inconceivable storm of suffering, black with impenetrable clouds, swept through His being again and again; until the Father answered His prayer, not by removing the cup, but by sending an angel to stay and strengthen Him while He drank it to its dregs.

Here was no mark of weakness in the Son of man, but every proof of glorious strength. His perfect purity rendered His sensibilities finer than those of any other who has worn the guise of man. His sufferings were infinitely more excruciating than any human being has the ability to experience. Yet He braved them with an unconquerable heroism, which denotes Him the mightiest of mankind. That His sufferings were due in part,

not to the fear of death, but to the dread of dissolution, must be recognized unless we deny the completeness of His human nature. He who could realize the horror of physical destruction as no other, shrank, as have the noblest men in all ages, from that spoliation of the body which we call death. Yet He faced it in the hours that followed the agony in the garden with marvelous composure. There was also a mental anguish, occasioned by the knowledge that in the ordeal to which He was appointed He should be the innocent victim of bigotry, falsehood, misconception, malice, and cruelty, all inspired by the sin He came to cleanse, and perpetrated by those who had spurned His love. But beyond all this, deeper than any eye of man can peer, and defying all the approaches of human reason, lay the supreme cause of our Lord's agony. The nearest we can draw to that source of a suffering we can not understand is to say it was bound up with the Savior's consciousness that He, the spotless One, who

came from the bosom of the Father, was to bear in Himself the enormity of man's sin. To go farther in reasoned interpretations of this truth is to attempt the inscrutable, or to make a rude adventure into a sanctuary too sacred for our touch.

When Michael Angelo was engaged in painting the Crucifixion, he obtained permission to do as he liked with a criminal who had been condemned to be broken on the wheel. He caused this poor wretch to be stabbed in those parts of his body which would occasion the most excruciating torture, as the artist supposed, "that he might represent the agonies of death in the most natural manner." To the better spirit of this age such wanton cruelty would be nothing other than sacrilege, even for a purpose which might be construed as pious; but the attempt to find analogies with which to illustrate the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane is not less profane. If it were possible to analyze the emotions of our Lord, no benefit

sufficient to justify the process could be found, for what He suffered then has no correspondence with any conceivable human experience. He was entering the awful shadows of that incomprehensible sacrifice, in which He was not only the High Priest making the offering, but also the altar's victim bearing the reproach of the world's sin. The bitterness of that infinite shame can not even be imagined, much less expressed in words.

Thrice during His agony our Lord turns to the little group of disciples He has asked to watch with Him, and each time finds them sleeping. He is indeed alone. They are heavy with a sorrow, which closes their eyes and numbs their bodies. His sorrow is too sharp for sleep, and He can not refrain from asking Peter if the disciple who professed willingness to die for his Master can not watch with Him one hour. Still He will not harshly upbraid these weary men. "Sleep on now, and take your rest,"

He says with gentle irony; "Behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hand of sinners." Through the trees He has seen the gleaming torches of the approaching crowd, and in the silence of the night has heard the steady tramp of feet, the sure token that Judas is drawing near with his "band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees." The traitor has remembered the miraculous power of Jesus, and fears to undertake His arrest without a military escort. Pilate has granted him a detachment of soldiers from the garrison of the Castle of Antonia, and the Sanhedrin has given him a number of the temple police. The Roman governor has been easily persuaded that there is danger of an uprising, and the religious authorities are unwilling to take any chances. How preposterous this show of force appears in the light of what follows!

"Rise, let us be going," says Jesus to His lagging disciples; "behold, he is at hand

that doth betray Me." With these words Jesus advances to the gate of the garden, where He awaits the onset of the enemy. Judas knew the place very well. If the band went first to the upper room and found it deserted, they came without hesitation under the traitor's guidance to the spot which had often been hallowed by the presence of Jesus. "Whom seek ye?" calls out our Lord to the approaching host. "Jesus of Nazareth," is the hoarse response. "I am He," serenely speaks the Master; whereupon the astonished vanguard falls back upon the ground amazed at the calm dignity of the Man they have come to seize, and overpowered by the mysterious influence which seems to proceed from His majestic presence. All unnecessary to distinguish Jesus in the light of the flaring torches is the venomous kiss of Judas; but he must needs give the pre-arranged mark of designation, and thereby deepen his own damnation. All unnecessary are the swords and staves, and the bravery of force, to ap-

prehend Him whom they might have taken any day in the temple, as Jesus reminds His captors. "Shall we smite with the sword," cry the followers of Christ, as they now rush from the gate of the garden to rally round their Lord, as they have promised themselves to do if He were threatened with danger; and before He can answer Peter has flourished out his poor sword and laid it across the head of a man who is helping to bind his Master. "Put up thy sword into its place," exclaims Jesus sadly; "for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I can not now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" Immediately He heals the wounded ear of the slave whom Peter has assaulted, and is borne away by the shouting throng, a prisoner in the hands of those who have resolved to kill Him with or without the sanctions of the law.

The squid, a small cousin of the octopus, a denizen of the deep, the naturalists tell us

has the power when frightened to become almost colorless in an instant. In extreme terror he discharges a dirty brown secretion, in the manner of his kind, and escapes while his enemy is enveloped in the impenetrable smudge. Judas thus fled from the tumult he had provoked into the darkness of the night, having surrounded Him whom he had chosen to treat as an enemy with thick clouds of treachery and murder. But no midnight could be black enough to hide him from the eye of the Christ. He felt the pitying gaze of his abandoned Master upon him every hour, and had not one moment's peace until he sought oblivion in suicide.

The first item in the dread ordeal of shame foreshadowed in the agony of the garden had been met by our Lord without a tremor of hesitation or fear. With the bearing of a king yielding to the escort of a royal guard, Jesus had submitted to the seizure of His person by the band His enemies sent against Him.

"What," asks Epictetus, "was even a death of disgrace to Socrates, who by entering a prison made it cease to be disgraceful?" The bonds of Jesus likewise—what were they but badges and signs of glory? They were but the palpable proofs of His perfect subordination to the will of God. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He exclaims, as He nobly protests that He might, but will not, summon troops of angelic warriors to deliver Him from the hands of His bloodthirsty foes, and moves grandly on to further sufferings for righteousness' sake, the triumph of the agony in the garden showing in His very countenance.

II

IT was yet the dead of night when Jesus was arrested, and the Sanhedrin could not legally meet until dawn. But the enemies of our Lord were eager for His blood, and proposed to take every precaution for a speedy termination of the judicial process by which

they would pretend to give Him a fair hearing, though it was only through an abuse of authority that they could hope to accomplish their purpose. They first led their prisoner away to Annas, a former high priest, who still retained the title, and was held in much repute for astuteness and cunning, being one of the most influential members of the Sanhedrin. Before this unscrupulous ecclesiastic a preliminary examination of Jesus appears to have been held. Following this an informal investigation was conducted by Caiaphas, the high priest, son-in-law of Annas. Finally at daybreak the Sanhedrin met in formal assembly and unanimously condemned Jesus to death. The object of the preliminary examinations or informal trials was to find evidence enough to justify the charge of blasphemy. As soon as this could be accomplished there would be no doubt of the Sanhedrin's action. Success was attained in this effort, but not without the help of Jesus, who sublimely bore the only testi-

mony on which He could be convicted. The narratives of the several inquisitions which resulted in the condemnation of our Lord to death by the Jewish authorities are of such a nature as to make it difficult to distinguish the occasion of each separate event, but the infamous process by which He was doomed to destruction is perfectly clear.

The first attempt is an inquiry touching the disciples and the doctrines of Jesus, with a view to inducing Him to confess the number and character of His followers, and the substance of His secret teachings. Jesus meets this assault by reminding His questioners that His doctrines have been given in public, and that they can find evidence of their quality by summoning as witnesses those who have heard Him, many of whom are doubtless available. When an officer of the high priest now struck Him for answering that dignitary in what he was pleased to think an unbecoming fashion, Jesus pointed to His own blameless character, and called

for testimony instead of brutal treatment. That was a fine exhibition of our Lord's sense of the gross injustice to which He was being subjected, and made it imperative that the rulers should find witnesses through whose words they could at least make an outward show of conforming to the legal rights of the prisoner. Some difficulty attended this effort; but at last two men were secured who were willing to bear false witness against Jesus, and they affirmed that He had declared His ability and purpose to tear down the temple with His hands, and to build it again in three days without hands. Concealing the deep indignation which He must have felt at this base misrepresentation of His words, Jesus maintained a dignified silence, though warmly urged to explain Himself. But the testimony of the foresworn witnesses was so contradictory as to details that it would not bear review by the Roman procurator, who must ratify the decision of the Sanhedrin before sentence could

be executed. Hence a charge must be found which could be substantiated. If Jesus could only be induced to incriminate Himself the case would be won. This occurred the moment Caiaphas said, "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." "Thou hast said," replied Jesus; for, put to His oath, and challenged to tell the truth about Himself, He could do nothing else than affirm His Messiahship in the most unmistakable terms. With sublime self-consciousness, His eyes filled with the vision of His ultimate glory, He looks away from that counterfeit court to the judgment throne of God, and, regardless of the peril which now besets Him, pours into the ears of His tormentors the amazing prediction, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." It is more than enough. With real or affected horror the high priest rends his garments in token of the pain which is

tearing his pious heart, and cries, "Blasphemy!" while round the circle of his colleagues runs the verdict, "Guilty! let Him be put to death!"

With this the travesty of a judicial investigation ends, but not the indignities which our Lord must bear. It is not enough that order has been violated in permitting a verdict to be rendered by acclamation in place of a formal vote, and that the law has been outraged which requires that sentence be deferred until at least a day after the culprit has been condemned. The Christ must now submit to the grossest insults at the hands of the minions of the Sanhedrin, who spit upon Him, buffet Him, blindfold Him, and sneeringly bid Him prophesy who is smiting Him, as blows fall thick and fast upon His sacred person, some of them being struck by the officers themselves. With many taunts and revilings did they thus humiliate and defy the Lord of Glory, who opened not His lips, but meekly endured the shame, sustained by

the consciousness that He was fulfilling the divine law of His mission. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

The Sanhedrin, meeting in solemn and regular form shortly after daybreak, did not hesitate to confirm the findings of the irregular night sessions, which are given more space in the Gospels than the final and legal assembly, as having really performed the business in hand. If the Jews had not been a subject people, the authorities would have put Jesus to death by stoning immediately, for He had been convicted of blasphemy. But they were compelled to submit the Sanhedrin's sentence to the Roman governor's review, and thus Jesus was sent to Pilate for a second trial.

Meanwhile, two events had been occurring, which were very significant in themselves, but which may be hastily passed over, that our attention may be concentrated upon Jesus, the great central figure of this drama.

Peter's threefold denial of his Lord had taken place in the court of the high priest's palace under circumstances of the most humiliating character. The knowledge of this defection had added a new sting to the Savior's sufferings, and had given the erring disciple a painful proof of his own weakness. As the Master dealt most considerately with Peter, so must all be charitably disposed toward him, when they remember the ease with which feeble flesh succumbs to sudden and peculiar temptations. "For myself," said the temporizing Erasmus, "if it came to the point, I should do no better than Peter."

Judas Iscariot once more, and for the last time, has also made his entrance upon the stage of this tragic history. When he sees that Jesus has actually been condemned to death by the Sanhedrin, and has now been placed in the hands of the Roman power to suffer the penalty of His falsely procured conviction, the enormity of his wicked blun-

der seems to fall upon the traitor's mind with crushing weight. To appease his conscience, now tormented beyond endurance, he rushes in desperation to the chief priests and elders with his thirty pieces of silver, and begs them to take back the horrid bribe, saying, "I have sinned in that I betrayed the innocent blood." But no relief can be obtained in that quarter. "What is that to us?" the rulers reply with scorn; "see thou to that." The record of what follows is brief and terrible: "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed and hanged himself." In the case of Peter there is penitence; he "went out and wept bitterly." In the case of Judas there is remorse; "he went and hanged himself." With the former there was hope, with the latter despair. The one was restored to fellowship after his dreadful fall, the other chose to plunge deeper into infamy. Even Judas might have been forgiven, had he flung himself at the feet of Jesus and asked for

mercy, but pardon he does not seem to have cared to seek, and so he "went to his own place."

When Jesus was brought before Pilate early on Friday morning, that wily servant of Rome, though he was aware of the cause which drove the Jews to his judgment hall, having granted them a military force the day before for the very purpose of apprehending our Lord, still proposed to compel them to observe the forms of law, and to be mindful of their subjection to a foreign power. He therefore asks them what accusation they bring against their prisoner. At first they attempt to avoid a specific charge, under the general plea that if He were not guilty they would not ask for His death; but when Pilate bids them go and deal with Jesus after their own laws, a thing which both he and they know to be impossible under the circumstances, they come at once to an accusation which they feel the procurator can not disregard: "We found this fellow perverting the

nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." Two-thirds of that charge was false in the letter, and all of it in spirit; but it arrested the attention of Pilate. "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" he asks. The response of Jesus is as specific and direct as that which He gave the high priest, when asked to declare under oath if He is the Messiah: "Thou sayest rightly that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth." But to be sovereign of the truth is a thing Pilate can not or will not understand, and in any case this humble peasant does not appear to him to be a very dangerous aspirant for royal honors. Tired of the whole affair, the procurator says to the accusers, "I find no fault in Him at all." But the Jewish authorities are not so easily to be put aside; and they clamor that Jesus has been stirring up sedition everywhere among the people, beginning

at Galilee. The mention of that insurrectionary province gives Pilate an instantaneous notion of the way in which he can extricate himself from this annoying tangle. Galilee is under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas; and forthwith Jesus is remanded to that dignitary, who is in the city to attend the Feast. This is the first of a series of unsuccessful efforts, growing more earnest as they proceed, which Pilate makes to avoid delivering Jesus to death. When Herod sends our Lord back with the statement that he finds nothing worthy of serious consideration in the accusation brought against Him, the procurator tells the crowd again that this is his own conviction. But, as they are still insistent upon the death of Jesus, Pilate gives them an opportunity to choose between the release of the robber Barabbas and the object of their wrath, following the custom of pardoning some criminal during the Feast. Instigated by the chief priests, the mob cries for the release of the bandit. Then Pilate

hopes to satisfy their thirst for blood by ordering Jesus to be scourged, a punishment so terrible that he fancies it will appease their anger. At the end of this frightful ordeal, the soldiers in attendance put a crown of thorns upon the head of Jesus, throw a purple robe over His shoulders, put a reed in His hand for a scepter, kneel before Him in mock obeisance, and hail Him King of the Jews, while they spit upon Him, and strike Him with rods. Pilate then brings Jesus out to the multitude, supposing that His pitiful appearance will touch their hearts, and induce them to let Him go with the punishment He has received. But they are mad with the passion for murder, and the bruised and bleeding figure before them only seems to inflame their purpose to kill Him. They exclaim: "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." At the mention of that mysterious claim Pilate is visibly moved. He has already received a message from his

wife, warning him to have nothing to do with the slaughter of this righteous person, and though he has attempted by symbolically washing his hands to divest himself of all responsibility for His condemnation, he is startled into a nameless fear by the charge that Jesus has demanded divine honors. He takes Him within the Prætorium, as he has done several times before during this trial for private inquiries, and asks Him, "Whence art Thou?" When Jesus preserves absolute silence, Pilate is apparently offended, and bids Him remember that He is within the grasp of an authority that no man can defy with impunity. But Jesus quietly replies that Pilate's power is simply a temporary grant from Heaven, and that guiltier than he are the Jews who have delivered an innocent man into his hands. The procurator would now have released Jesus, for his conscience had been touched, and his dread of this solemn and mysterious prisoner who made such lofty claims had been quickened.

But every effort was unavailing. The Jews knew how to touch his superficial nature with effectiveness. They pointed out the peril to which Pilate was exposing himself in sparing a man who had certainly spoken against Cæsar; and as the governor had already fallen under the Emperor's censure for the faults of his administration, self-interest impelled him regretfully to abandon Jesus to His fate. He petulantly and tauntingly cries to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They shout back, "Away with Him! away with Him! crucify Him!" Pilate says, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests respond, "We have no king but Cæsar." Then Pilate pronounces sentence, and delivers Him to the authorities to be executed; Jesus is stripped of His purple robe, resumes His own garments, and is led away to be crucified.

"How I wish that I did not know how to write!" exclaimed the young Nero, when he was asked to affix his signature to an order

for the execution of a culprit. That was long before he had hardened into the brutal monster whose lust for blood rendered him infamous forever. Pilate may be supposed during the trial of Jesus to have wished that he might be divested temporarily of the authority which thrust upon him the apparent necessity of giving his official assent to the death of Christ. Confronted by the opportunity to do a brave thing at the cost of losing favor with the people, whose turbulence might injure him with Cæsar, he chose what seemed to be a personal advantage, and yielded against his better nature to the enemies of our Lord.

Meanwhile, the Jews have cursed themselves with the invocation of Christ's blood upon themselves, and upon their children; and they have sworn themselves to be the slaves of the hated Roman despotism, two appalling facts fraught with the direst consequences. The penalty which their hatred has heaped upon the sinless Christ re-

turns upon themselves with unspeakable sufferings. The tragedy is theirs, not His.

Yet no words can express the sorrow which Jesus experienced during this distressing ordeal. The willful offense against His sinless majesty of those who ought to have perceived the beauty and grandeur of His character, the persistency of the religious leaders of the people in demanding the death of their Messiah, the resistance which Pilate finally showed to the good impulse stirring in his nature, the horrid mockery of the brutal and ignorant soldiers, the people's tragic choice of Cæsar instead of Christ, and the awful sense of the burden which rested upon His own shoulders as the Savior of mankind united to produce grief unspeakable in His unsullied soul. Well may we be urged to "consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself." Surely He "resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

The sublime dignity with which Jesus car-

ried Himself through this series of trials marks Him as King in character as in name. He holds His title by the strength of His personal fitness. The elder Disraeli tells us that "a Polish monarch having quitted his companions when he was hunting, his courtiers found him a few days after in the market place disguised as a porter, and lending out his shoulders for a few pence." On their remonstrating against this strange conduct, his majesty replied: "The load which I quitted is far heavier than the one you see me carry here. . . . I have slept more in four nights than I have in all my reign. I begin to live, and to be king of myself. Elect whom you choose." When a scepter was placed in the hand of another Polish monarch, he exclaimed, "I had rather tug at an oar!" Many a sovereign has sighed to be relieved of an intolerable burden of state. Jesus felt the weight of His royal obligations with a deeper suffering than any other king ever endured; but He held Himself to His

task with incomparable devotion till death absolved Him from His earthly trials.

His tormentors stripped Him, and flung a scarlet robe upon His shoulders to make merry over His claims to royalty, but no garment of ermine ever covered so majestic a sovereign. They thrust a reed into His hands for a scepter, but no symbol of authority ever signified so much or was wielded by so mighty a monarch. They placed upon His brow a crown of thorns, but it was the noblest that could have been chosen to express the real meaning of His sovereignty. He came to serve and to suffer, and He attained His glory through sacrifice. John of Barneveld used to wear a felt hat with a rope of diamonds tied around it. That was fine enough for any ruler, provided his government was just. Every thorn-point in Christ's crown was a celestial jewel, shining with supernal radiance. The wounds upon His sacred head were marks of divine royalty. His cruel executioners filled the courts

of Pilate's judgment hall with ribald jests and hideous laughter, as they knelt in mock obeisance before Him; but the horrid ridicule of men or devils could not dim the truth that He who meekly submitted to such contempt and cruelty was King of kings and Lord of lords. Tiberius Cæsar, tottering from his throne and dying yonder like a hunted animal, might with his latest thought try to sustain his spirit with the reflection that, however dismally he was now perishing, he had at least for a term of years ruled the mightiest empire on the earth, and placed his name securely on the pages of history; but Jesus knew that when the Roman power had vanished, and all the kingdoms of this world had passed into oblivion, He would be acknowledged as Lord of heaven and earth.

III

MAHOMET taught his followers that the enemies of Jesus were only guilty in intention; "a phantom or criminal was substi-

tuted on the cross, and the innocent saint was translated to the seventh heaven." There have been those in the Christian Church who have held a similar opinion, supposing that Jesus was not in fact subjected to pain and death. There is no need to refute this preposterous heresy. What is truly difficult is even to approximate a right conception of the intensity of His sufferings, and the excruciating character of His death. No words other than those of the Gospels are necessary to place the tragedy of Calvary vividly before us. The fullness of the combined accounts is most significant of the transcendent importance which the evangelists assigned to the death of our Lord. To no other part of His earthly ministry have they devoted so much attention. It is indeed the thing about Christ which commands the profoundest interest among all classes of persons. To describe the Crucifixion, then, is not required; to feel its wonderful revelation of the divine-human personality of Christ is of utmost worth.

What a mingling of human emotions with divine passion is disclosed in those utterances, and the episodes which inspired or accompanied them, which are known as "the seven words from the cross:"

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

"Verily, I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

"Woman, behold thy son." . . . "Behold thy mother."

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"I thirst."

"It is finished."

"Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit."

To read these wondrous utterances should be enough to break the most impenient heart. To discuss them is almost profane.

"And sitting down they watched Him there," is recorded of the guard sent to superintend the details of Christ's execution.

All the world has been observing with increasing tenderness the spectacle of that sacrifice.

The prediction of Jesus is being rapidly fulfilled: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." The cross which was chosen to degrade Him has elevated Him before the gaze of the world. Everywhere humanity, hungering for compassion, turns wistfully toward Calvary, and looks upon the smitten figure of Him who died to prove the love of God to men. The very instrument on which Jesus was slain has been idealized in human conception. A sublime symbolism attaches to its physical proportions. To its figure has been ascribed a mysterious power. In the middle of the second century the sign of the cross began to be used as the seal of baptism, and early came to embody a superstition which is still cherished by millions of devout souls. To it was attributed magical and talismanic influences. It was employed in connection with almost

every transaction for the sanction of conduct and the protection of the person. It erected itself on the retina of the soul's eye, so that men saw it everywhere—in the intersection of highways, in the forking of streams, in the formations of the clouds, in the constellations of the stars, in a thousand manifestations of nature. Constantine beheld it in the sky, and exulted in the prospect of victory for his armies. The Crusaders saw it gleaming above their heads, and were inspired to move dauntlessly forward to the East. This was something more profound than a distempered religious fancy. It was the prophecy of a sublime and eternal fact. The cross is on the forefront of the universe. Salvation through sacrifice is the central truth of human history. No philosophy can obscure it, and no science can explain it away. Said the venerable Theodore Cuyler: "I am sick of all this talk of advanced thought in religion. When thought advances beyond the cross on Calvary, it goes over a precipice."

The disposition of the greatest minds is not to ignore, but to emphasize, the significance of Christ's death. The cross is fundamental to religion, and magnetizes the heart of humanity.

Here is one story which is of perennial interest, and its recital is accompanied by a succession of miracles from the days of the apostles until now. Told along the shores of the Mediterranean, in the classic cities of the old pagan world, it upheaved the ancient civilization, seized the imperial throne of the Cæsars, and conquered the lands from the sands of Africa to the waves of the Baltic. Told among the barbarous hordes of the North, it fired the enthusiasm of the Franks, destroyed the practices of the Druids, overthrew the idolatry of the Teutonic races, and established freedom of conscience in Europe. Told in America, it has civilized the Aborigines, freed the Afro-American slaves, elevated the position of woman, enhanced the dignity of the toiler, and will eventually abolish every

form of despotism. Told anywhere, it creates revolutions and instigates moral and social regenerations. Tell anything in its place, and progress ceases. The plays of Shakespeare, the epic of Milton, the speeches of Demosthenes, the philosophy of Plato touch the intellect and warm the imagination, but leave the soul fainting for nourishment, and do not move society a hair's breadth nearer to salvation. The story of the cross illumines the mind, glorifies the heart, floods the soul with divine light, and carries civilization on toward God.

At Calvary men see eternal love pouring forth infinite compassion for the world, and while they look they come to realize that they are beholding not merely a scene of suffering for the spotless Lamb of God, though that were enough to evoke the pity of angels, but a tragedy which the sin of humanity has occasioned, and which is being re-enacted perpetually wherever men and women are trans-

gressing the laws of God and trampling His love under their feet.

A few years ago the most remarkable picture in the French Salon portrayed Jesus being bound to a pillar preparatory to His scourging. It was less than a yard square, but it became the talk of Paris. It was daring in conception, masterful in color and technique, and it seemed fairly to hypnotize all who stood before it. In the center is the figure of Jesus, clad in a scarlet robe, crowned with thorns, standing at bay, with bare and bleeding breast, confronted by an infuriated group of twentieth century persecutors. Around His waist is a rope thrice coiled, being pulled tight by a stalwart workman in corduroy trousers, who to obtain a better purchase presses his upraised knee against the right thigh of Christ. A herculean butcher with brutal head, and wearing a blood-stained apron, and having a clasp knife and steel dangling from his side, is drawing up the sleeve from his forearm, pre-

paring to begin the flagellation. An oily, sensual financier in clothes of the latest cut, and a vulgar profusion of jewelry, helps to adjust the rope around the Savior's waist. A man in evening dress, white tie, and the insignia of a secret society threatens Jesus with his clenched fist. A harlot clutches a lock of the Savior's hair, about to tear it from His sacred head. A weird, nervous man's hand in the foreground grasps a stone which he is about to hurl. There are uplifted arms holding whips, canes, and burning torches. The countenances gleam with anger, irony, and hatred. Almost all the figures are represented with open mouths, from which one can hear in imagination utterances of jeering and derision. These twentieth century persecutors are students, Socialists, and artisans, all the more disquieting in their portraiture because their faces resemble those of men in French public life.

Now, that which makes this picture so terribly impressive is its undeniable truthful-

ness. Everywhere in modern society there are persecutors of Christ, "crucifying the Son of God, and putting Him to an open shame." Every man and woman who turns aside from Him, who refuses fellowship with His Church, and who says, "Let Him and His cause get on as best they can," is guilty of the death of Christ. It is sin that has induced them to commit such cruelty, and we can hear Jesus saying, as He did on His cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." But they who, seeing the uplifted Savior, embrace His pierced feet, and beg His forgiveness, flinging themselves on His unconquerable love, are in their penitence and trust, granting Him that for which He gave His life.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

SATURDAY

"Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden."

THE SEVENTH DAY

A SABBATH DAY

John xix, 41, 42.

THE Son of man asleep in a garden—what a beautiful picture, and of what sublime suggestiveness! "Detroy this temple," said Jesus one day to some prominent Jews, "and in three days I will raise it up." They were enraged at this proud forecast, not realizing that "He spake of the temple of His body." Later they remembered His words, and made proper interpretation of them, and took precautions to prevent their fulfillment. All this availed them nothing, but that is not to our purpose at this instant. For the moment we are looking upon Jesus asleep in the garden. His enemies could not destroy the

temple of His body, it seems, for it is simply resting in the garden.

That sacred body could not be allowed to be mutilated. The heart broke, but the limbs were not shattered. The spear pierced His side, and nails were driven through His hands and feet, but the wounds they made were only scars of glory to show His victory. It was a sacred body the attendants took down from the cross, and it could not be permitted to suffer the outrage endured by criminals, whose bodies were flung into a pit of refuse.

A rich man loaned his own tomb for that hallowed form. It was a new sepulcher, freshly hewn out of the rock in the hillside. It was borrowed for only two nights and a day, and loaning it did not inconvenience the owner. It was ready for him when he required it, and it was made forever illustrious by its temporary occupant. Pious folk have searched for it, zealots have fought for it, and light has streamed from it for centuries.

It was needful that the tomb for that sacred body should be new and never before occupied. As Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem to the music of popular acclaim, on the back of a colt no other man had ever mounted, so He must sleep in a sepulcher in which no other man had ever reclined. Even His inanimate body must not see corruption.

That tomb must be carefully guarded for many reasons. The enemies of Jesus would have it so to satisfy themselves. The angels would have it so to satisfy the hosts of Heaven. Therefore Roman soldiers are placed about the sepulcher, and its portal is sealed with a huge stone and the celestial embassy fold their wings over it. That body must not be taken away. It is a very safe place in which the Son of man is asleep.

And the sepulcher is in a garden. How divinely suitable is the place! God is in a garden, if anywhere. You say He is everywhere, and sometimes wonder if it be true. Is He where men are being cruelly tortured

for their crimes, where war is reddening the earth with the blood of patriots, where little children are being ground to death under the wheels of conscienceless trade, where souls are being worn out in the struggle of business competitions, where lives are being debased by illicit pleasures, where humanity is being slaughtered by tempests and earthquakes? But in a garden you never doubt that God may be found. He was in Eden, walking in the cool of the evening. He was in Gethsemane when the Son of man was pouring forth His prayer and agony. You are certain He is in Joseph's garden, where the Son of man is asleep. It is such a fit place for Jesus, and so wondrously attractive to God.

The garden is perfectly adapted to what is occurring in that tomb, the triumph of life over death. It is the proper place for humanity to be delivered from the curse of sin —humanity which lost its virtue in a garden, and must in a garden find it again.

A garden is a place of beauty. He who is fairer than the sons of men should rest there. The beauty of His person, the beauty of His words, the beauty of His deeds, the beauty of His character—each makes it fitting that He should recline in a place of beauty. He sleeps well in a garden.

It is night in the garden, and night itself is beautiful. The coolness of it heals the smart and worry of the day. The shadows of it temper the soul to the trials of life. The poetry of it redeems the mind from the dull weight of care and perplexity. The dreaminess of it fills the heart with sweetness. The struggles of the world are quieted here. Children imperfectly taught the meaning of night dread its darkness, and the superstitious crowd it with specters. Evil persons betray its shadows into foulness, but good people love its seclusion and serenity. It bathes the weary soul with rest.

It is night in Joseph's garden. Moonbeams fall prone upon the tomb and glance

from the helmets of the soldiers. Stars are looking down from Heaven in deep contemplation. Women are watching and waiting for the morning. A soft breeze is blowing. Fragrance fills the air. The shrubbery stirs. Beauty and quietness invest the garden.

It is the truest picture of death that we have. It is a sleep which is beautiful in its silence. Death throws a halo around every character. It softens all the lineaments of a harsh face. The personality that was fine in life becomes finer in death. The transforming power of death, the transfiguration it produces—this makes it friendly to the interests of mankind. All our graves should be in gardens. It would serve to remind us that the Son of man slept in a garden after He had been smitten of His foes, and that the utmost that death could do for Jesus was to give Him a beautiful resting-place, and that this is the farthest death can go with any of us.

A garden is a place of peace. The Prince

of peace may well repose in such a place. The peace He is in Himself, the peace He came into the world to impart, the peace He will bring to the nations of the earth and to the souls of men, make it very suitable that He should sleep in a garden.

Put your warriors in gorgeous mausoleums, twine battle flags above their tombs, range cannon and rifles, balls and bombs, about their places of sepulture. Let the insignia of carnage mark the memorial piles which celebrate their strife. Make your statesmen to lie down in Westminster Abbey, build monuments to them in the great capitals of the world, write their deeds on marble and bronze in the halls of legislation and the courts of kingdoms. Let your aspirants for wealth and honor, for human favor and earthly applause, be placed in death at the very centers of busy marts and thronged walks, where men will recall the struggles by which their eminence was attained, and will question the value of their achievements.

But put your saviors in a garden. They brought peace out of discord, health out of sickness, right out of wrong. Put the Savior of all men in a garden, where peace has its tokens in every flower, and the very silence is only broken by the songs of birds and the humming of insects; where life is gentle and existence is a psalm.

It is Sabbath in the garden. Rest is here given to the restless. Thou weary One, who ever went about doing good, giving Thyself to human need so persistently and without pause, that Thy friends and enemies alike thought Thee mad, rest here now and be at peace. None can trouble Thee hereafter, though many will be sorely troubled at Thine awakening, not knowing how to make their peace with One whom they have despised because they knew not His power and grace.

It is Sabbath in Jerusalem; but for many of the inhabitants it is not a day of rest. The populace recall the deeds of yesterday,

and debate the consequences of foul murder in the guise of judicial condemnation. The enemies of Jesus are vexed by the fear that they have overreached themselves. They think of that tomb in Joseph's garden with serious apprehension. They have guarded it with military force, but will that keep it from breaking open?

It is Sabbath in Heaven. The note of joyous expectancy fills all the songs of the angels. A wonder will come to-morrow on the earth. Knowing its character, and the certainty of it, the celestial hosts are eager for the appearing of the light on yonder globe which shall tell the universe that Christ is risen.

It is Sabbath in the garden and in the tomb. The Savior sleeps and the Roman soldiers have nothing to disturb their thoughts. A man dead one day is as good as dead forever. Let the Master be at peace, and let the world keep its Sabbath as it will. This is the last Sabbath of the old dispensa-

tion. There will be a new one to-morrow, and it will gradually efface the ancient day.

That is a fine figure death makes on the calendar of the world, giving Jesus triumph over time, and putting the first day of every week at the top of all sacred memorials. "He rests from His labors, and His works do follow Him." That is the utmost death can do with Him—give Him a Sabbath peace and crown Him King of civilization. That is the utmost death can do with any of us—give us Sabbath peace and let us be victorious over time and change.

A garden is a place of life. It is well for the Prince of life to repose there. He can not be held by the bonds of death. The garden is full of life. The quickening impulses of the fructifying earth are there. It is the laboratory of nature. The plants, the trees, the insects, the birds, the tiny creatures burrowing in the soil, contribute their evidences of the vitality of the universe. What a significant hum of life the ear can catch in a

garden when the mind is closed to the deafening roar of the world! Yet all the machinery of civilization is set to music for the soul that can understand.

The Giver of life is sleeping in a garden, but He will awake. He will break from that tomb, as the stream breaks from the mountain, and will fill the earth with the plenitude of His life. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," He has said, and He will open life for evermore in a garden.

A garden is a prophecy of universal joy. Slip into a garden after a day of toil and observe how it crowds upon your mind the picture of a world redeemed from sin and suffering. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Christ who rose from sleep in the garden will make it so. His power in His Church will extend to earth's remotest bound. He will clothe the world

with beauty, and make the souls of men to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

> The Lord into His garden comes,
> The spices yield their sweet perfume,
> The lilies grow and thrive;
> Refreshing showers of grace divine
> From Jesus flow to every vine,
> And make the dead revive.

The nations will be saved by Christ's omnipotent grace. Humanity, which began in a garden and was driven out of it for lack of obedience, will return at last to Paradise, and from sheer fullness of joy will cry,

> "'T is daybreak in the garden!"